■ LIFESTYLE / C1

The dawn of a new woman

■ SPORTS / A21

Kobe lifts Lakers past Suns for 3-1 lead in series

■ METRO / A17

Exit being built near Alabang viaduct in preparation for SLEx rehabilitation

■ WORLD / A20

Nepal leaders curb king's powers

Workers of the world push for better lives

WORKERS RALLIED MONDAY ACROSS ASIA and Europe to press for better conditions—from improving safety in notoriously dangerous factories to boosting wages—often encountering a heavy police presence and, in some places, outright resistance.

In Sri Lanka, where violence between Tamil Tiger rebels and the military has heightened fears of a return to civil war, the government canceled

WORKERS/ A9

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Tuesday, May 2, 2006 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 143 P18 website: www.inq7.net

20 PLDT unionists give cops the slip

By Margaux C. Ortiz, Gil Cabacungan Jr. and Alcuin Papa

PERHAPS THE YELLOW shirts made them invisible.

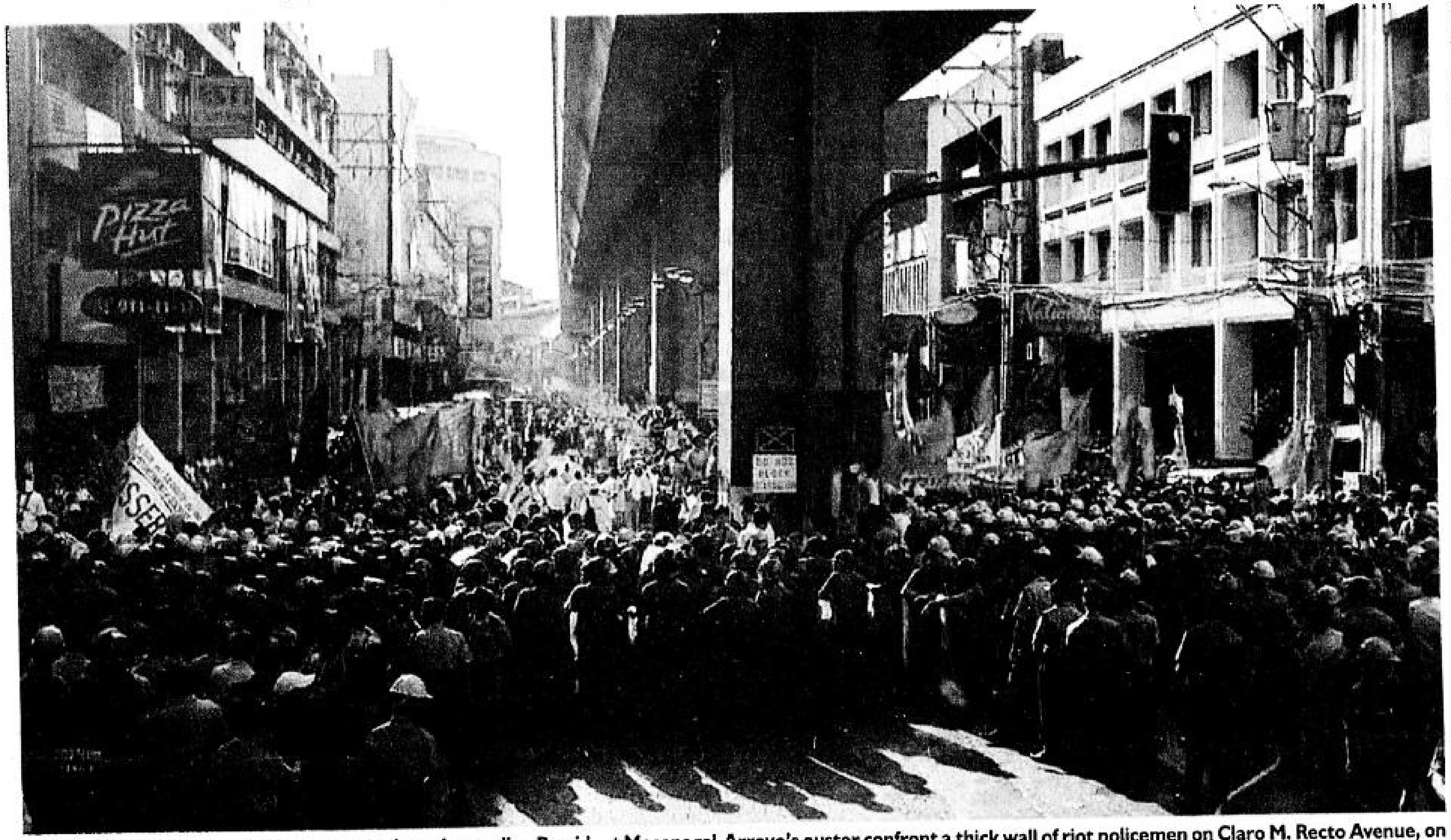
Some 20 members of the workers' union of the country's biggest telephone

20 PLDT/ A15

NASALISIHAN!

Mendiola: A bridge too far

Blocked by riot policemen, protesters claim victory in Recto rally



STANDOFF: Thousands of Labor Day marchers demanding President Macapagal-Arroyo's ouster confront a thick wall of riot policemen on Claro M. Recto Avenue, on their way to the Don Chino Roces (formerly Mendiola) Bridge near Malacañang. EDWIN BACASMAS

By Christian V. Esguerra, Margaux C. Ortiz, Jerome Aning and Blanche S. Rivera

IT WAS WITHIN REACH BUT not quite within grasp.

In sweltering 36-degree Centigrade heat, thousands of militant workers yesterday tried to march to historic Mendiola (Don Chino Roces) Bridge to dramatize their demands for a P125 wage increase and the removal of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

But they ran into walls of riot troops at almost every turn and had to settle for a noisy rally on Claro M. Recto Avenue and Nicanor Reyes (formerly Morayta) Street, about 200 to 300 meters short of their target.

"This is an important victory. Even if we didn't reach Mendiola, we at least reclaimed Recto," Leody de Guzman, secretary general of the Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino, told the INQUIRER.

"That, to us, is very meaningful and it was brought about by the workers' numbers and determination. We'll just double our numbers next time."

Media estimates put the number of the marchers at 5,000 to 7,000, against a police count of 3,000, and the organizers' generous

MENDIOLA/ A4

Workers demand wage hike nationwide

By the PDI Bureaus

THOUSANDS OF WORKERS across the country marched on Labor Day to demand wage increases in rallies that were generally peaceful.

The loudest cheers were heard in Davao City when Mayor Rodrigo Duterte announced that he had allotted P10 million as a bonus for City Hall workers.

"I understand your situation, especially during these times. I urge the Congress to grant the workers' salary demand for a wage and salary increase," said Duterte at the rally attended by 1,000 workers at Rizal Park across from City Hall.

In Baguio City, about 100 workers found their ranks "invaded" by self-proclaimed teenage "anarchists" whose May 1 message contradicted the crusade that union workers had been asserting for centuries.

The spike-haired teenagers' cause was "antiwork." They argued that militant workers should fight to "free themselves from slave labor to win genuine freedom from capitalists."

One worker reacted angrily to the teenagers, saying: "All forms of work are dignified, but we are fighting for higher wages to guarantee that this dignity of work continues. These children know nothing about real work."

The youths were members of an underground punk music movement that had been protesting the Feb. 14 arrest of 11 teenagers who were linked to an alleged communist rebel raid on a military detachment in Benguet.

They carried placards that said: "Tired of your work? Go antiwork."

WORKERS/ A4

MEMBERS of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty raise their fists after laying wreaths at the foot of the Don Chino Roces Monument. REM ZAMORA

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo listens to Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas during a Labor Day program at Heroes Hall in Malacañang. LYN RILLON

Cops, Army troops arrest 20 militants

By Luige A. del Puerto and Michael Lim Ubac

AT LEAST 20 MILITANT LEADERS AND WORKERS were arrested in an apparent preemptive police action to weaken the Labor Day protests.

Rep. Satur Ocampo of Bayan Muna said 14 peasant leaders preparing to join a caravan to Manila were arrested in Candelaria, Quezon, yesterday.

"We know these people. They are not members of the New People's Army," said Ocampo, who talked to reporters at the House of Representatives where he has taken refuge since he was charged with rebellion in February.

On Friday, four members of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) were arrested in Barangay Sungay in Tagaytay City while driving to Manila, ostensibly to join yesterday's rallies.

The Philippine National Police identified the four as Aries Sarmiento, Marvin Galang, Axel Alejandro Pinpin and Riel Custodio and said they were NPA guerrillas. Sarmiento was described as an NPA provincial secretary in Cavite.

The Philippine Army said its unit in Kananga, Leyte, had reported the arrests of Thelma

COPS/ A15

GMA unveils ₱40-B package of benefits for workers

By Christine O. Avendaño

AS MILITANT GROUPS MARCHED in the streets on a sweltering Labor Day, President Macapagal-Arroyo hosted a luncheon for moderate trade union leaders in Malacañang where she announced a P40-billion package of benefits for workers, including a pay raise for government employees starting next year.

Aimed at mitigating the effects of high prices on workers' incomes, the package of benefits unveiled by the President included the condonation of P12 billion in penalties and surcharges slapped by the Social Security System (SSS) and the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) on about 10 million members who had been unable to repay their housing and salary loans.

"Our gains in the economy mark payback time for the people," Ms Arroyo told the labor groups led by the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines and the Federation of Free Workers. Business leaders also attended the Palace luncheon.

In her speech, the President appealed to workers in the private sector to seek a "reasonable" wage increase when the issue comes up for deliberations in the regional wage boards. The boards are made up of represen-

GMA/ A6

30,000 jobs offered at Labor Day 'mega fair' in QC

By Gil Cabacungan Jr. and DJ Yap

AS THOUSANDS OF WORKERS loudly staged Labor Day demonstrations, an equal number of people quietly filed their resumés at a government-sponsored job fair, hoping for a chance to land a decent job.

Job hunters—from fresh graduates to overseas workers and retrenched wage-earners—trooped to the Quezon City Hall Risen Garden for the Department of Labor and Employment-sponsored "mega job fair."

Clutching their employment documents, the jobseekers submitted their applications at booths set up by recruitment and placement agencies representing local firms as well as overseas companies.

At least 100 local companies and 50 foreign recruitment agencies participated in the fair, a joint project of the DOLE, the Quezon City government, the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines and other agencies.

It offered at least 30,000 jobs, most of which were service-oriented and required highly or semiskilled workers, according to Labor Undersecretary Danny Cruz.

Of the local jobs, most were in call centers, hotels and restau-

30,000 JOBS/ A6

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms becoming frequent rains over Western Visayas. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening.

COMPILED BY: KATE PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/05/01/06 SOURCE PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

FVR lifts Cha-cha deadline, urges AFP rebels to 'rest'

By Cynthia D. Balana

EX-PRESIDENT on current President: It's still waning and waning.

FORMER PRESIDENT FIDEL Ramos said yesterday he was giving up his June 2006 deadline for Charter change but was still confident that a parliamentary form of government would be in place by May 2007.

Ramos acknowledged at a news conference prior to departing on a three week visit to the United States that the original timetable he had set for constitutional amendments and the resignation of President Macapagal-Arroyo were now beyond his control.

"My timetable was June 2006 but it was delayed or derailed by the impeachment and the creation of the Consultative Commission on Charter Change," Ramos said. "But I'm still hopeful for a change to parliamentary system because I've been espousing that transformation since 2001."

Ramos based his optimism on the ongoing "people's initiative" and Speaker Jose de Venecia's efforts to amend the Constitution.

Asked to comment on former President Corazon Aquino's active role in the STOP Cha-cha movement, Ramos replied, "That's not new.... I'm sure that they're motivated by good objectives. Let's credit them for their intention but it's not for me to say whether they will succeed or not."

Reminded that Aquino and the late Cardinal Jaime Sin had succeeded in averting Charter change during his presidency, Ramos said that the situation then was different.

"As far as I'm concerned, it had nothing to do with the lifting of term limits of public officials and a second term for the president," he said.

While Ramos favored a shift to the parliamentary system, he vigorously opposed the no-election scenario of the Arroyo administration as well as the lifting of term limits of local officials in pushing for Charter change.

Asked about his support for the President, Ramos replied, "It's still waning and waning, and it has not changed."

Ramos also urged elements in the military who may be planning to destabilize the administration to "rest."

Ramos said he believed that the military organization per se was not restive but only a small fraction of it.

Ramos said that while in the United States, he would meet with business groups, think tanks and members of the Filipino communities in San Francisco, San Diego and Los Angeles in California; in Atlanta, Georgia; in Washington DC and New York City.

SC to rule on GMA emergency decree

By Armand N. Nocum

THE SUPREME COURT is set to deliberate today on Presidential Proclamation No. 1017, the decree by which President Macapagal-Arroyo placed the country under a state of national emergency in February, and is expected to come out with a decision at least before its break on May 8.

In an interview with reporters, Supreme Court spokesperson Ismael Khan Jr. did not discount the possibility the ruling could come out today.

"Definitely, the Supreme Court justices will tackle it [today]. We are hoping they can also rule on it," Khan said.

But, certainly, the high tribunal would come out with its ruling before the 15 justices go on a "decision-writing break" from May 8 to June 2, he said.

In oral arguments on PP 1017, the petitioners seeking to declare the edict unconstitutional claimed that what the proclamation did not say and how the military and police interpreted it were what made it dangerous.

COMBAT-READY presidential guards sit near a stack of container vans used to fortify Malacañang Monday. The May 1 Labor Day rallies near the Presidential Palace ended peacefully. REM ZAMORA

Lawyers led by Rene Saguisag and former UP law dean Raul Pangalangan said it was the "vagueness" of the proclamation that made it subject to vast interpretations, which could result in the serious abuse of basic liberties.

"It is void for its vagueness," said Saguisag, lawyer for one of the petitioners, Ninez Cacho-Olivares, the publisher and editor in chief of The Daily Tribune who had asked that the proclamation be nullified.

Saguisag asked the court not to consider the matter moot but to give a "clear-cut ruling" in order to warn the government against violating the people's rights.

"We cannot allow anybody to experiment with our liberties," he said, citing the raid on the Tribune by police following the issuance of PP 1017 on Feb. 24.

"This is really meant to be a warning against bigger media [outfits like] ABS-CBN and the INQUIRER. They were testing the waters," Saguisag said, in reply to a question on why the Tribune, with its limited circulation, was raided.

The ruling on PP 1017 will come on the heels of the high court's decisions last month contravening two other controversial presidential decrees—Executive Order No. 464 and the calibrated preemptive response (CPR) policy.

EO 464 required all government, military and police officials to shun congressional inquiries unless allowed to attend by the President, while the CPR policy ordered the strict implementation of Batas Pambansa Blg. 880, particularly on the conduct of protest rallies.

Gov't sees P26-B bonanza from VAT

By Philip C. Tubeza

DUE TO RISING OIL PRICES AND IMPROVED tax collections, the government could expect a P26-billion windfall from the expanded value-added tax (VAT) this year, Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya Jr. has told Congress.

This is over and above the P75.79 billion the government had expected to collect from VAT this year, Andaya said.

Because of this, Andaya, in a report to the House committee on appropriations, said the Department of Budget and Management had prepared a "wish list" of projects totaling P26.3 billion.

"The principle is to plow back windfall revenues from higher oil prices into high impact projects to deflect any criticism that the government is the first to benefit from expensive fuel," he said.

VAT collections from oil products were expected to increase with the continued rise in world oil prices. Crude oil reached a high of $75.35 per barrel in global markets last week.

A majority of congressmen had called for the temporary lifting of the 12-percent VAT on oil to mitigate the impact of rising oil prices but Malacañang dismissed the idea.

Andaya said that of the projected P75.79-billion VAT collection for 2006, P22.7 billion had been earmarked for "public projects and programs" to pump-prime the economy and improve social services.

The P22.7 billion is 30 percent of the projected VAT collection. The rest—P52.5 billion or 70 percent of total collections—would go toward reducing the budget deficit, he said.

Andaya said a summary of "expenditure items chargeable against VAT" showed that "economic services" would get the biggest slice of the pie with P10.4 billion.

Next is the social services sector with an allocation of P9.2 billion to be shared by the Philippine National Police, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda) and the Department of National Defense, among other agencies, he said.

Under "social services," Andaya said, the government released P1 billion to the PNP to buy patrol cars—"VAT mobiles" he dubbed them—and hire 3,000 new policemen.

Andaya said most of the projects were in the nature of "capital outlays" or infrastructure.

Under what he called the VAT "rebate to the people" plan, education would get P7 billion to cover textbooks, teacher recruitment and training, school feeding programs and libraries.

On health, Andaya said P2.1 billion had been earmarked for enrolling indigent families in PhilHealth.

On the other hand, three agencies will receive the bulk of the proposed capital outlays under economic services: The Department of Public Works and Highways (P5.8 billion), Department of Transportation and Communication (P3.1 billion) and Department of Agriculture (P953 million), Andaya said.

He said the DPWH will use nearly its entire share as counterpart funds for foreign-assisted projects but will leave P100 million for the widening of Quezon Avenue in Quezon City and P111 million for "roads that will support" the Subic-Clark expressway.

Palace cautioned against lowering tariffs on oil imports

By Philip C. Tubeza

A RANKING LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF Representatives yesterday cautioned Malacañang against lowering the tariffs on oil imports, saying this would not guarantee lower oil prices but would only benefit the oil companies.

Deputy Majority Leader Eduardo Gullas said, "Our concern is that in the absence of a significant and definite benefit to consumers, any tax cuts on oil would just give oil companies greater leeway to expand their margins, this time not only at the expense of consumers but also at the expense of much-needed government revenue."

The government last week announced plans to temporarily reduce the tariff on imported oil from 3 to 1 percent, a move the Department of Finance said could reduce pump prices by 50 centavos per liter.

"This is ridiculous," Gullas said. "What's the point if we effectively cut oil taxes by 50 centavos per liter today, only to have this countered tomorrow by the oil firms increasing their pump prices by P1 per liter?"

"Can regulators do anything to prevent oil companies from doing this? Our point is that a costly tax reduction should have tangible benefits to consumers. Otherwise, there's no point pursuing the cut," he said.

In his statement to the press, Gullas said: "If the government must cut oil taxes, it must do so only after oil prices abroad had stabilized over a certain period or had started going down."

"This way, oil companies will have no excuse whatsoever to further raise pump prices. Timing is crucially important," he said.

Crude oil touched a high of $75.35 per barrel in global markets last week. This prompted the government to consider temporarily suspending the 12-percent value-added tax (VAT) on petroleum products.

The Cabinet on Tuesday opted to reduce the tax on oil imports instead.

Gullas said he was also opposed to the temporary suspension of the VAT on oil products for the same reasons he was against the tariff cut.

Two weeks ago, Catanduanes Rep. Joseph Santiago revealed that the country's two oil refiners—Petron Corp. and Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp.—had made a whopping P11.8 billion combined in after-tax profits in 2005. This was up P5.54 billion or 88 percent from the P6.26 billion in combined after-tax earnings they posted in 2004.

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Mendiola: A bridge too far

From page A1

figure of more than 20,000.

The march served as the first test of how the government would comply with, and how the protesters would react to, the recent Supreme Court decision striking down Malacañang's controversial calibrated preemptive response (CPR) policy while upholding Batas Pambansa Blg. 880, the law on public assembly.

On their most important day, the divided ranks of workers set aside deep ideological differences, joined forces on Recto and held 30-minute rallies one after the other.

Not an inch

The police surrendered not one inch of the bridge that has stood for decades as a symbol of antigovernment resistance.

The militants dispersed at 6 p.m. with not a single blast from police water cannons unleashed on them—as happened to a group of protesters led by priests in October last year—or a single rock thrown at the police.

The singular demand for Ms Arroyo's ouster, along with demands for a wage increase and a halt to administration efforts to revise the Constitution, brought together the so-called Reaffirmist and Rejectionist factions within the fragmented Left.

'Gloria united us'

"We set aside our differences to work on the larger question, which is the legitimacy of Ms Arroyo," Akbayan party-list Rep. Loreta Ann Rosales said.

The two main bodies of protesters, estimated by police at more than 8,000 at one point, earlier converged on Liwasang Bonifacio, occupying separate ends, for a program that started at noon.

BP 880

The militants claimed the police blockades were in defiance of the high court's decision allowing free assembly unless the authorities could prove that the demonstration posed a clear danger to society.

Claiming Mendiola was a no-rally zone, police blocked the protesters at least three times—on Quezon Bridge, at Abad Santos Street and on the Escolta corner Banquero.

At each blockade, police waved BP 880 at the marchers. That law has long been a source of confusion.

Police say it requires protesters to obtain a rally permit, but the militants argue that it also provides that requests for such permits are deemed granted if the mayors fail to act on them within two days.

Josua Mata of the Alliance of Progressive Labor gave that argument during a standoff at the Escolta.

'Just a glimpse'

"But what's the difference if you hold your rally at Mendiola or Liwasan?" asked city administrator Dino Nable.

"It means a lot because Mendiola is historic," replied De Guzman.

At one point, De Guzman said: "*Matanaw lang namin ang Mendiola, victory na 'yun* (Glimpsing Mendiola would be victory enough for us)."

Supt. Arturo Paglinawan of the Manila police legal office claimed the city government had rejected the application because of what he said was a "clear and present danger" of violence from the ranks of the protesters.

Sensing nothing would come of the negotiations, half of the workers sneaked through other routes, taking Abad Santos and Tomas Pinpin streets to get to Mendiola.

They were finally stopped on Recto.

Sanlakas president Wilson Fortaleza said the blockades showed that the SC decision had no effect on the police.

Ka Bel in spirit

In a prerecorded address in Filipino which was broadcast at the Liwasang Bonifacio rally, detained Anakpawis Rep. Crispin "Ka Bel" Beltran said a P125 wage increase and an end to Cha-cha were "the overwhelming demands of workers and the Filipino people today."

"We should struggle to oust her (Ms Arroyo) from the presidency. Poverty will worsen in our country for as long as she stays in power," said the ailing 73-year-old Beltran. He is facing rebellion charges and spent Labor Day in Room 427 of the Philippine Heart Center.

The workers listened in silence to Beltran's message, which was played to the sound of socialist songs in the background, and burst into applause and chants for his freedom when it ended.

Cha-cha song

Beltran called on workers to continue their peaceful struggle until they attained their demand for a P125 across-the-board wage increase for private workers and a monthly P3,000 across-the-board salary increase for government employees.

In a message via phone patch from the Batasan complex, the Batasan 5 lawmakers—Representatives Satur Ocampo, Rafael Mariano, Teodoro Casiño, Joel Virador and Liza Maza—praised the workers for their protest actions "despite the Arroyo government's paranoia, grave threats and anti-workers' acts and policies."

Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas chair Danilo Ramos read a poem he composed against Cha-cha:

"*Pag nailusot ang Cha-cha, mababalewala hinaing ng masa/Tama na, sobra na, ayaw na namin sa maldita.*"

Future of the young

Ma. Theresa Pangilinan, the Cavite State University graduate who gained national attention after heckling Ms Arroyo during commencement exercises, told the rally that many graduates were jobless.

"Their question to the President is: What will they benefit from Ms Arroyo's government? Will they be able to give us what we deserve? What is the assurance they can give us for our future?" she said.

Sen. Jamby Madrigal and former Vice President Teofisto Guingona Jr. were the only politicians who came.

Tension briefly marred the march of some 1,000 supporters of ousted President Joseph Estrada after police blocked them.

The marchers, led by People's Movement Against Poverty (PMAP) chair Ronald Lumbao, had planned a brief stop at Mendiola on their way to Ermita but were blocked in Sta. Mesa.

Peaceful protest

After negotiations, it was agreed that the police would escort them to Plaza Salamanca via Pandacan.

The peaceful protests pleased Malacañang.

"We're satisfied because organizers and demonstrators lived up to their promise of just bringing out their concerns and sentiments," said Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita. He said he wished it would be "the model for future activities of this nature."

Ermita said reports that some groups might use the protests to try to unseat Ms Arroyo probably came from people who wanted to give the impression that they could take on the government.

With reports from Luige A. del Puerto, Tina Santos, Michael Lim Ubac, Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Norman Bordadora

Correction

IN THE MAY 1 ISSUE, a story on Page A11—"Peasants ask GMA to solve killings in Negros"—erroneously described Roberto Cuenca, owner of Hacienda Velez-Malaga, as a "former Marcos crony." Roberto Cuenca's father, Rodolfo, was the Marcos crony.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

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Cops had Don Chino virtually to themselves

By Volt C. Contreras

THE KNEELING YET DEFIANT statue of Don Chino Roces seemed begging for company—but all it had yesterday was a blue swarm of riot police.

Policemen and presidential guards kept Labor Day demonstrators several hundred meters away from the historic Chino Roces Bridge (formerly Mendiola), preventing them from gaining a symbolic foothold on the street leading to Malacañang's gates.

'Silent prayer'

But at around 5 a.m. yesterday, one group composed of around 10 people was allowed to hold a "silent prayer" at the Roces monument on the bridge, according to a local police superintendent.

Members of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty, a group based at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City, laid wreaths at the foot of the statue of the late journalist and street fighter, recited prayers, and left peacefully after about five minutes.

Commemoration

"They were allowed because we agreed that they will just hold a silent prayer; no slogans or streamers," said the local police detachment chief, Supt. Teodorico Perez.

A GCAAP statement obtained by the INQUIRER said the early morning rite was in commemoration of the May 1, 2001, siege of Malacañang by supporters of jailed ex-President Joseph Estrada.

The wreaths, it said, were in honor of the "faceless and nameless heroes" of that pre-dawn march to the Palace which came to be known as Edsa III.

Don Chino gives shade

But as the day progressed, the wreaths eventually withered in the sun and the Roces monument became a source of shade for a few police officers.

Policemen deployed on the bridge spent the day alternately standing in formation and falling out, some snatching a few minutes to take naps on the pavement or grab snacks.

The Philippine National Police brass band—lately a fixture in big crowd-control operations in the capital—played from under a tent every hour or so for comrades enduring the scorching summer heat.

Showdown never came

As of 6 p.m., their much-anticipated "Mendiola showdown" with militant groups failed to materialize as another police blockade set up at nearby Nicanor Reyes (formerly Morayta) Street successfully held off the marchers belonging to leftist groups.

Aside from metal fences and rolls of razor wire, police readied at least two fire trucks to repulse any protesters who would dare.

PAGLAUGDAUG UG

KILUSANG Mayo Uno spokesperson Ryan Guerrero holds up a hammer during a protest rally in Cagayan de Oro City.

GRACE CANTAL-ALBASIN/ PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

MEMBERS of Sanlakas rally on Colon Street in Cebu City to press their demand for a P125 wage increase.

JUNJIE MENDOZA/ CEBU DAILY NEWS

PP 1017
CPR
EO 464
NGAYON
KAILANMAN
NUNUPIL
MBAL

WILSON Baldonasa, president of the Alliance of Nationalist and Genuine Labor Organizations, assails free trade during the Labor Day rally in Baguio City.

VINCENT CABREZA/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

OUSTGMA!
Gloria BABA! MOV't

NIÑO JESUS ORBETA/PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

PROTESTERS march in the streets of Legazpi City during the commemoration of Labor Day.

GLORIA
EXPRESS
EXPRESS

IT was also an occasion to denounce efforts to change the Constitution for protesters in Davao City.

DENNIS JAY SANTOS/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

Workers demand wage hike nationwide

From page A1

Other placards advised people to "love your life, not your work" and "work for your life, not for your boss."

Cha-cha heckled

Negros Occidental Gov. Joseph Marañon said in Bacolod City that business groups had agreed that those who could afford to should raise the wages of their workers to help cushion the effects of rising prices.

More than 4,000 workers attended rallies in the capital city of Negros Occidental.

In Iloilo City, around 2,500 protesters assembled at a rally led by the Kilusang Mayo Uno and the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) at the Iloilo Rotary Amphitheater.

They heckled activists portraying President Macapagal-Arroyo and Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez and dancing the "cha-cha" to show opposition to Charter change.

In Capiz, around 800 protesters participated in a rally led by Bayan, Gabriela, Anakbayan and the Capiz Movement Against Arroyo's Cha-cha at the Roxas City Bandstand.

In Aklan, 300 protesters marched from Pastrana Park to Crossing Banga in the capital town of Kalibo.

More than 2,000 laborers joined separate rallies on Colon Street in Cebu City. The rallies were peaceful, except for a brief confrontation between the Partido ng Manggagawa and the KMU.

In Leyte, more than 300 members of different militant organizations held a rally at the Old Bus Terminal on Rizal Avenue in Tacloban City.

Calabarzon protests

An estimated 12,000 workers from highly industrialized Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon) staged protests in different parts of the region and demanded economic relief for workers instead of Charter change.

A caravan of close to 1,000 motorcycles and tricycles also joined the protest mobilizations in four sites.

Doris Cuario, secretary general of the human rights group Karapatan in Southern Tagalog, said at least 150 workers were prevented by police and military troops from marching toward a park in Antipolo City in Rizal.

In Albay, about 1,500 protesters from different multisectoral groups joined the rally. They started marching at 9 a.m. from the Ninoy Aquino Park in Daraga town to the Pinaglabanan monument in downtown Legazpi City.

Release Beltran

Beverly Quintillan, Bicol-Bayan Muna public information officer, said her group would like party-list Rep. Crispin Beltran and five other congressmen facing rebellion charges to be freed.

The protesters also insisted on a P125 daily wage increase and a P3,000 across-the-board raise for government employees.

In Tabaco City, also in Albay, over 1,000 laborers of Tabaco Port Cargo Corp., the biggest labor organization in the city, marched in the downtown area.

In General Santos City, some 1,500 militants staged a rally pressing for a P125 increase in daily wages.

In Cagayan de Oro City, about 4,000 paraded in the streets. They came from as far away as Bukidnon, Iligan City and other towns of Misamis Oriental.

Muslims cry harassment

In Pagadian City, at least 700 protesters gathered at the plaza. In Cotabato City, angry Muslims accused lawmen of harassing them while they staged a rally.

In the City of San Fernando in Pampanga, some 1,500 workers from the three biggest economic zones in Central Luzon demanded a minimum "living wage" of P600 daily.

The marchers belonged to several unions at the Bataan Economic Zone in Mariveles, Bataan; Subic Bay Freeport Zone in Zambales and the Clark Special Economic Zone in Pampanga where 100,000 workers are employed in mostly exporting companies.

Emily Fajardo, spokesperson of the Manggagawa sa Kalayaan ng Bayan (Makabayan), said the current daily minimum wage in the region, ranging from P178.50 to P228.50, should be raised threefold to meet the basic needs of families.

The National Economic and Development Authority pegged the cost of living at P600 daily, she said.

Subic Bay Freeport

In Olongapo City, some 500 members of the Makabayan in Zambales picketed at the gate of the Subic Bay Freeport to seek living wages.

Before they joined the rally, at least 120 garment workers from Clark were stopped for 30 minutes by police at Barangay Sindalan in San Fernando, according to their leader Emy Guevarra.

Nestor P. Burgos Jr., Jolene R. Bulambot, Carla P. Gomez and Joey A. Gabieta, PDI Visayas Bureau; Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Job B. Belen and Michael B. Jaucian, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau; Rolando Pinsoy, Dennis Jay Santos, Judy Quiros, Aquiles Z. Zonio, Grace Cantal-Albasin, Jeoffrey Maitem and Michael Sarcauga, PDI Mindanao Bureau; Tonette Orejas, Central Luzon Desk; and Vincent Cabreza and Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Sit down and talk, Gordon urges Palace, senators

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

GORDON: Let's talk of important issues to move country forward.

AN ADMINISTRATION SENATOR yesterday called on President Macapagal-Arroyo and other senators to set aside their differences and sit down for a dialogue.

Sen. Richard Gordon said that even if the President and the senators could not agree on Charter change and the issue about Ms Arroyo's alleged cheating in the 2004 elections, they should come to terms on programs that would alleviate poverty and improve the economy.

"We may not be able to agree on Cha-cha and [the Hello] Garci [issue] but we can talk about important issues to move the country forward," Gordon said.

He cited issues like studying the Value Added Tax impact on rising crude oil prices, coming up with programs to boost agriculture and giving Filipinos access to quality education.

Gordon, chair of the committee on constitutional amendments and revision of codes and laws, made the appeal amid the continuing hostility between the President and the Senate. Ms Arroyo had accused the Senate of being obstructionist and of conducting inquiries "in aid of destabilization."

El Shaddai leader Bro. Mariano "Mike" Velarde sounded off Senate President Franklin Drilon about a meeting between the President and the senators.

Drilon confirmed that Velarde mentioned this to him last week, a day before Drilon met with former President Corazon Aquino and other opposition figures, business leaders and bishops to launch "STOP (Sa Tamang Oras at Paraan) Cha-cha."

"He (Velarde) mentioned it in passing. I just kept quiet," Drilon said in an interview.

Senators are at the forefront of a campaign against the people's initiative seeking to change the country's form of government from presidential to parliamentary, a system that would abolish the bicameral Congress into a unicameral legislature.

All but two of the 23 senators signed a resolution expressing opposition to the people's initiative as an "illegal" act of the Arroyo administration because it goes against a 1997 Supreme Court ruling declaring the initiatives and referendum act as inadequate for Charter change.

Senators were also emboldened by recent decisions of the SC which dealt twin blows to Ms Arroyo's policies. The high court ruled as unconstitutional portions of Ms Arroyo's Executive Order 464 which barred all government officials from attending congressional inquiries without her consent.

The SC also nullified Ms Arroyo's Calibrated Preemptive Response which was used to stop protest rallies.

CABINET EXECS SUMMONED

Senate to test SC ruling today

By TJ Burgonio

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO'S COMPLIance with a Supreme Court ruling voiding her ban on executive officials' appearance at congressional hearings will be tested today when the Senate tackles three major economic bills.

Officials from the Department of Finance, Department of Trade and Industry, Bureau of Internal Revenue and Bureau of Customs have been invited to hearings to be conducted starting today by the committee on ways and means on bills granting tax breaks to low-income workers, curbing smuggling and rationalizing incentives to new companies.

With the major portions of Executive Order No. 464 voided, officials from the executive department have no more excuse to decline the chamber's summons, said committee chair Ralph Recto.

"Those who sought refuge in EO 464 in refusing Senate subpoenas or in declining to answer legitimate queries will now have to settle the unfinished business they left behind," Recto said in a statement.

In its April 20 ruling on EO 464, the high court upheld Congress' right to compel executive officials to appear at inquiries in aid of legislation, voiding the order's provision requiring these officials to obtain the President's permission.

Officials had casually invoked the order to evade Senate inquiries into anomalies and hearings on measures since it was issued on Sept. 28 last year.

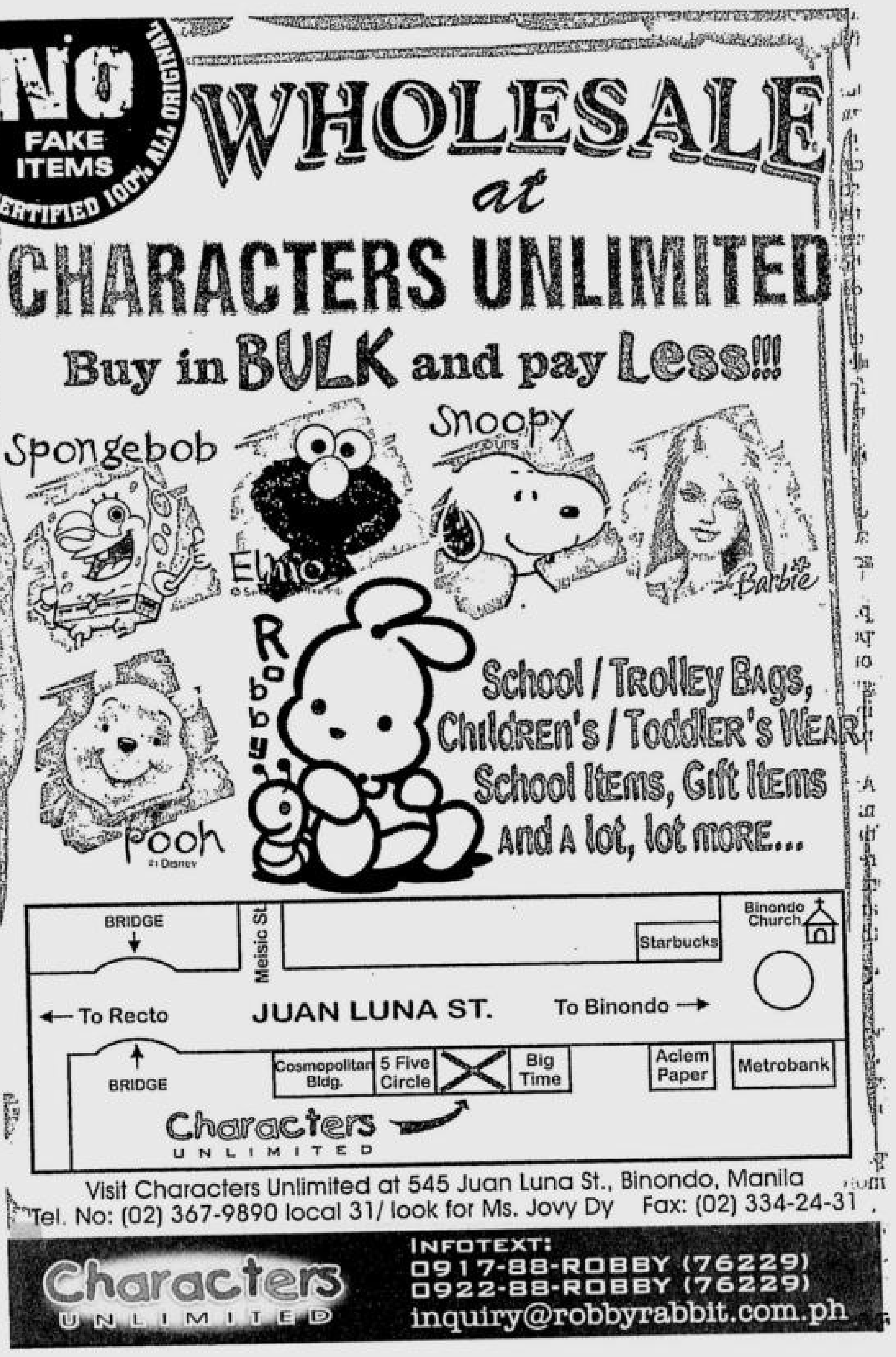
Recto pointed out that today's hearings on the three bills would be a good starting point to thresh out the differences between Malacañang and the Senate over the controversial order.

"If we are going to mend our broken relations, then these bills will be a good starting point. The icy relations would thaw fast if these would be the agenda," he said.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. rebuffed the call by House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles for the Senate to stop its investigations and instead pass key legislation.

A suspension or termination of the hearings on anomalies, he argued, was tantamount to an abdication by the Senate of its "constitutionally mandated role" to check the activities of Malacañang and exercise its oversight functions.

Spurred by the SC ruling on EO 464, the senators had declared that they would resume inquiries on the supposedly overpriced $503-million Northrail project and the "Hello Garci" tape scandal.



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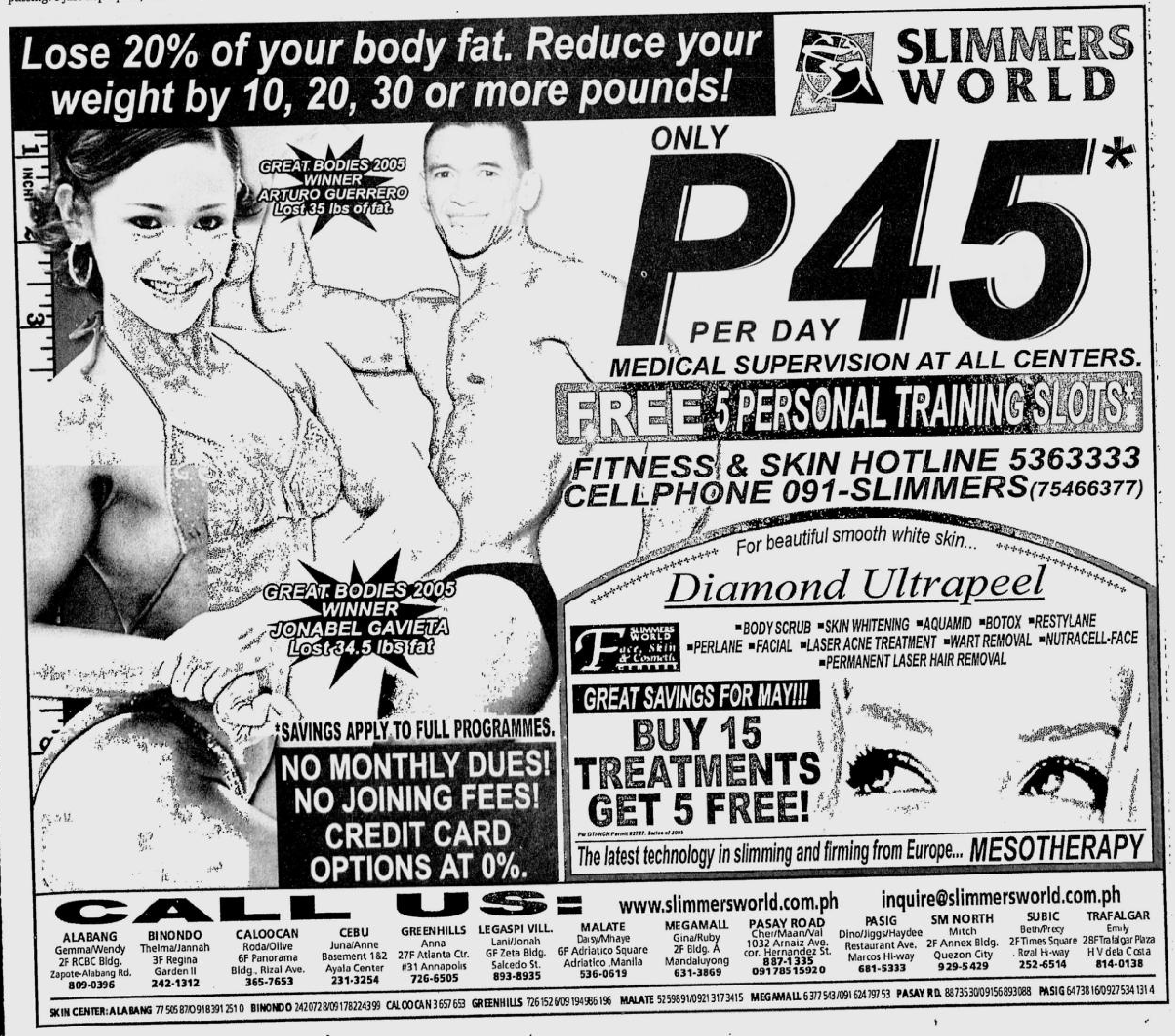

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GMA unveils P40-B package

From page A1

tatives from the government, business and labor sectors.

"This is the day for workers all over the world and a day to mark the strides that the great Filipino worker has taken to rise to the apex of competence and competitiveness," Ms Arroyo said.

In announcing her Labor Day package for workers, the President said she made it a point "to listen to the people's needs every day," unlike, she added, destabilizers who only listened "to the call of self-interest and endless strife."

"To the destabilizers, I say: Leave the people to their work and let the President do her job. To our destabilizers, I say: Stop the noise and start to serve," Ms Arroyo said.

Other benefits for workers announced by the President included:

- P3.2 billion in housing loans to be offered by Pag-Ibig at lower interest and longer repayment periods.
- P1.37 billion in loans to be provided by the Development Bank of the Philippines and Land Bank of the Philippines to employers' and workers' groups for the purchase of buses using cheap fuel, like compressed natural gas, for the use of employees.
- A government allocation of P1 billion from its energy conservation savings to purchase shuttle buses for its own employees.
- An allocation of P1.2 billion for the setting up of Procurement Services (PS) marts at government offices. The commissaries will offer food and housing items 7 to 20 percent cheaper compared to stores.
- Foregone government revenues of P1 billion from the income tax exemption of minimum wage earners.
- Government grant of training certificates/coupons amounting to P500 million for 10,000 people who would work in call centers.
- Allotment of P100 million for the rehabilitation of the Philippine General Hospital; scholarships totaling P60 million from GSIS; allocation of P40 million for the GSIS hospitalization support program, and P36 million for Philippine Health coverage for *sacada* (seasonal sugar worker) and other workers in the informal sector.

An estimated P615 million in company savings arising from workdays saved because a strike was averted also went into the computation of the President's P39.765-billion package of benefits for workers.

Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas told reporters that the workers got a "fairly good package" of benefits from the President.

Gov't pay raise

Sto. Tomas said government employees were elated by the President's assurance that a salary raise was forthcoming for the 1.2 million people in the bureaucracy.

"All these years, it has always been the increase in the wages in the private sector that has been given priority, but for the first time we focused on government workers," the labor secretary said.

The last time government workers got a pay raise was in 2001, and the last time the Salary Standardization Law (SSL) was implemented was in 1994, according to Sto. Tomas.

Ms Arroyo directed the Department of Budget and Management to include in the 2007 proposed budget the first tranche for the P20-billion implementation of the Salary Standardization Law. This will include the P13 billion in additional allowances for government workers, she said.

Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya said the DBM would file a bill amending the SSL to simplify the salary grade system in government.

Andaya said teachers, doctors and nurses were the intended main beneficiaries of the amendment to the SSL.

Ms Arroyo said workers had been hard up to repay their housing and salary loans to the SSS and GSIS, prompting her administration to condone P12 billion in surcharges and penalties imposed on these delinquent borrowers.

Hike in floor pay

In her speech, Ms Arroyo urged labor and business to find a middle ground where they could sit down to discuss the granting of a wage increase for workers in the private sector.

"Harmony, teamwork and creativity are the key to success," she said.

Donald Dee, president of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said the business sector was open to talks with labor groups to discuss a wage hike.

"We accept the call of the President," Dee told reporters. He proposed that business and labor leaders meet next week "to initiate a bilateral discussion on how to go about this before we go to a tripartite (meeting)."

Before Ms Arroyo had lunch with the labor leaders, she joined a 5:30 a.m. coffee break of call center employees of ClientLogic Philippines in Ortigas, Pasig.

According to her chief of staff, Michael Defensor, Ms Arroyo also met with the National Security Council to discuss the Labor Day rallies in Metro Manila.

After the NSC meeting, Ms Arroyo proceeded to the DBM office located near Malacañang to open the new DBM commissary there.

Ms Arroyo then took time out to talk to riot policemen stationed at the San Miguel gate of Malacañang.

Solons urged: Tap ₱19-B pork to fund pay hike

THE TRADE UNION CONGRESS of the Philippines (TUCP) has urged legislators to waive their P19-billion pork barrel this year so the funds could be used to finance the P3,000 monthly pay increase being demanded by government workers.

"We reckon that if members of Congress collectively waived at least 70 percent of their pork barrel, there will be enough money to fund a P1,000 monthly pay increase for all civil servants, on top of the P2,000 allowance tentatively approved by the Senate," Ernesto Herrera, a former senator and current TUCP general secretary, said in a press statement.

By giving up their pork barrel, members of the House of Representatives and the Senate would "give meaning to pair-sharing at this difficult time," according to Herrera, who introduced a voluntary cut in the pork barrel of senators when he was Senate finance committee chair.

Congressmen have increased their pork barrel to P60 million each this year from P40 million last year. This brings to P14.2 billion their aggregate pork barrel this year.

Senators have given themselves as much as P200 million each in pork barrel, for a total of P4.8 billion.

The pork barrel is a graft-ridden fund that legislators spend on projects for their constituents. It usually involves funding for public works projects and subsidies with benefits that are concentrated on a particular area but with costs that are spread among all taxpayers. Pork barrel spending is often allocated through last-minute budget bill insertions.

The Senate previously passed a bill granting civil servants, effective July 1, a monthly allowance of P2,000.

But Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, chair of the House appropriations committee, said the government lacked the funds to cover the Senate-approved allowance.

Money is available only for the P1,000 allowance previously authorized by Malacañang and endorsed by the House in a special bill, according to Salceda.

Herrera said Congress could still supplant the Palace-authorized P1,000 allowance, which costs government P13.4 billion annually, with a P3,000 salary increase in the 2006 budget which is up for approval in June.

Last week, Herrera said that as a result of huge savings and improved revenue collections, the government could easily grant civil servants a monthly pay increase of up to P3,000.

Herrera said a P3,000 pay raise would "substantially restore the purchasing power that civil servants had lost to inflation since their salaries were last revised upward in 2001."

30,000 jobs offered . . .

From page A1

rants, manufacturing plants, as well as in the electronics and health industries. Overseas firms were looking for machine operators, welders, restaurant staff, electricians and engineers.

More productive

DOLE-National Capital Region Director Ricardo Martinez said the job fair was a more "productive" way of celebrating Labor Day, in contrast to street demonstrations.

"Perhaps the protesters can find what they are looking for here, rather than on the streets," he said.

He placed the crowd at about 5,000, a figure confirmed by Quezon City police.

By lunchtime, however, the crowd had diminished considerably, since many of the jobseekers had gone home after dropping off their application papers.

Unemployment rate

The unemployment rate in Metro Manila currently stands at 10-11 percent, while the national rate is 8 percent, according to Martinez.

TUCP spokesperson Alex Aguilar said the job fair was one way of connecting unemployed or underemployed workers to the job market.

"We realize that we can't solve unemployment in one, even two years, but we don't believe that the answer to the problem is by causing more trouble," Aguilar said.

Work wanted

Arman Solito, 34, was one of the jobseekers who squeezed through the thick crowd, hoping to land a job as a waiter abroad. He used to work for a coffee shop in Saudi Arabia, but was retrenched.

Solito said the job fair was a good idea and should be held "more often, if possible."

A fresh graduate, Liza Abrera, 20, said she was applying for any position related to her Commerce degree from the Technological Institute of the Philippines. Like Solito, she also wanted to go abroad.

Marlo Ventura, 20, a recent high school graduate, was looking for a job to help him save up for college since his family was having financial troubles.

He sympathized with the Labor Day protesters, who, according to him, were only expressing their sentiments about low wages against the rising prices of basic goods.

"Once I find a job, I might end up rallying, too," he said.

Job creation

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday crowed about her success in cutting the unemployment rate by a quarter over the last five years, amid criticism from the labor sector including the TUCP.

In a speech before business and labor leaders in Malacañang, Ms Arroyo reported that her job creation initiative slashed the number of jobless Filipinos to three million from four million when she took power in 2001.

While most of the jobs created were low-quality and sometimes seasonal, especially in the agriculture sector, Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas said the bottom line for the government was to find employment for those looking for work—whatever the pay or skills required.

"No matter what place in the world you go, there is no economy where all the people are working in offices. There should also be farmers, plumbers and cleaners," said Sto. Tomas in defending the President's job creation program.

"The definition of jobs anywhere in the world is the same. The quality of their jobs cannot be any better than ours because the definition is the same."

Mismatch

The government has maintained that there is no job crisis in the country.

According to Sto. Tomas, there is only a mismatch between the job seekers' skills and the jobs available.

Trade Secretary Peter Favila, however, said most Filipinos were choosy about the work they wanted.

Sto. Tomas noted that some of the most high-paying jobs were blue-collar like welders, linemen, electricians and plumbers that do not require a college degree but a year or two of vocational training.

She added that while workers in other countries boasted of higher salaries, they also had to contend with higher costs of living.

"This is the reason we are moving to bring down the cost of living. We are already a high wage economy; we have the highest wage in the region except for Malaysia and Singapore, but we also have a high cost of living," Sto. Tomas said.

Decent wages

But according to the TUCP, the country's unemployment rate has worsened in the past five years.

Aguilar explained: "We don't agree with the rosy picture that there are many jobs out there. This is why we are insisting that the government spend more for infrastructure to hire more labor. We are also insisting that in the next years, the government should concentrate more on creating decent and well-paying jobs."

He said a decent wage (which is not the same as a minimum wage) should give workers a decent living, meaning "three square meals a day, money for recreation, some amount for savings, and they should not lack in funds for education and transportation."

Aguilar said the government should also consider suspending the implementation of the 12-percent value-added tax in oil products because the continued rise in fuel costs had taken a big chunk out of the workers' pay.

With a report from LJ Pasion

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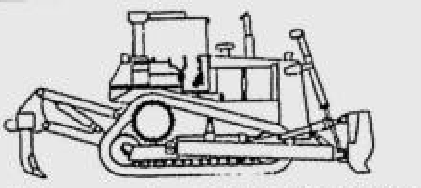

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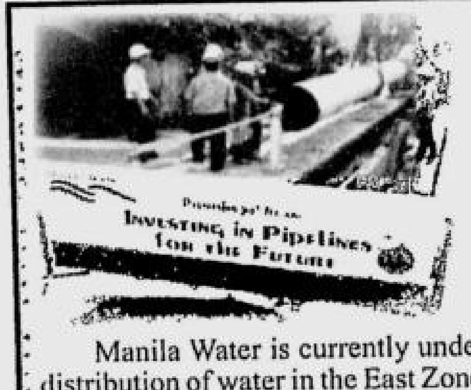

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DOJ APPEAL PLAN

Let go, lawyer in Subic rape case tells Gonzalez

By Tarra V. Quismundo

THE PRIVATE PROSECUTION PANEL IN THE TRIAL OF US MARINES ACcused of raping a Filipino woman yesterday called on Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez to stop fighting for the rights of the accused and let the proceedings take their course.

"I think he should stop issuing statements about this case and perform his functions accordingly. He has no official business anymore as secretary of justice regarding this case. Therefore, he should stop talking," said Evalyn Ursua.

Gonzalez had earlier assailed the rejection by Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 139 Judge Benjamin Pozon of the secretary's resolution seeking to downgrade the participation of three of the four accused servicemen to accessories, instead of principals, in the case.

Gonzalez said the court's decision was based on technicality and did not tackle the merits of the DOJ's petition. He vowed to file today a manifestation disputing Pozon's order.

The decision, however, represented a victory for the private prosecution panel, which was strongly opposed to Gonzalez's resolution.

"Filing a manifestation will not change the decision of the court, and he has no business [doing that]. He as Secretary of Justice should respect the decision of the court, and just let the defense lawyers take the next step," Ursua told the INQUIRER.

"Instead of fighting for the rights of the accused, he should just follow the proper procedure. It is not for him to contest the order," she added.

Defense lawyers said they would appeal Pozon's order before the Court of Appeals, as they believed the court had no right to reject a resolution of the justice secretary himself.

Accused of raping the woman in a van at the Subic Bay Freeport on Nov. 1, 2005 are Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith, S/Sgt. Chad Carpentier and Marine Lance Corporals Keith Silkwood and Dominic Duplantis.

Nene to Lito: It's suicide to run vs Jojo in Makati

SENATE MINORITY LEADER AQUILINO PImentel Jr. yesterday warned Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid that it would be political suicide for him to run for mayor of Makati City against incumbent Jejomar Binay.

"In ordering Senator Lapid to run for mayor of Makati, President Arroyo pulls out her last straggler in the Senate and pushes him to commit political hara-kiri," Pimentel said in a statement.

Pimentel doubted that Lapid, who hails from the President's home province of Pampanga, has a "fighting chance" against Binay, whose "voting strength" has become solid over the years "because of his effective leadership."

Lapid has said he is being egged on by the President and her husband to challenge Binay at next year's polls, wrest control of the city's top post, and put a stop to street protests there.

Binay, a close ally of indicted President Joseph Estrada who backed Ms Arroyo's rival for the presidency in 2004, the late actor Fernando Poe Jr., is in his fifth term as chief executive of the country's premiere financial district. *TJ Burgonio*

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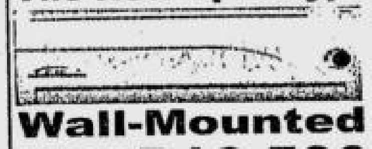

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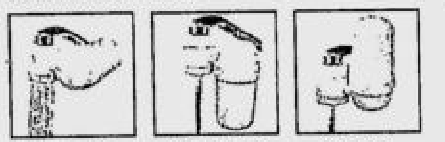

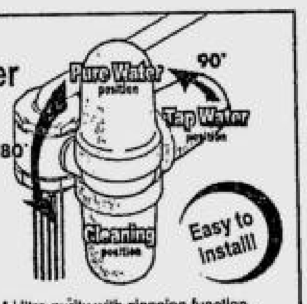

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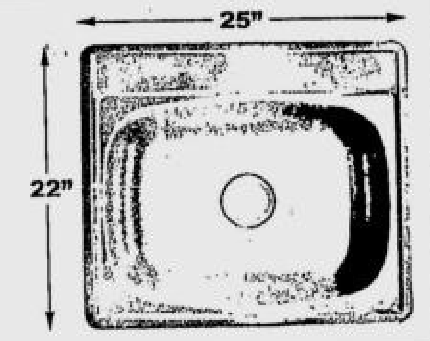

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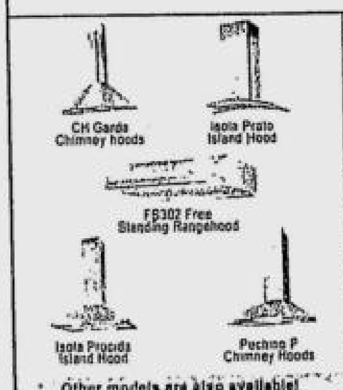

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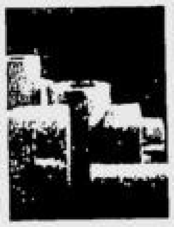

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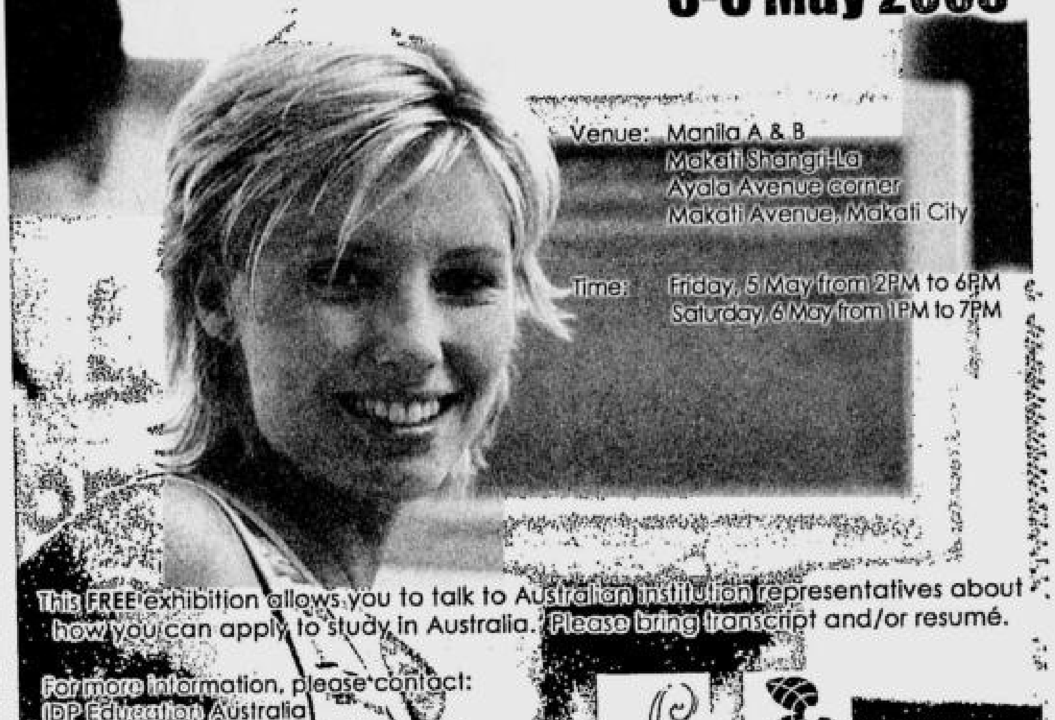

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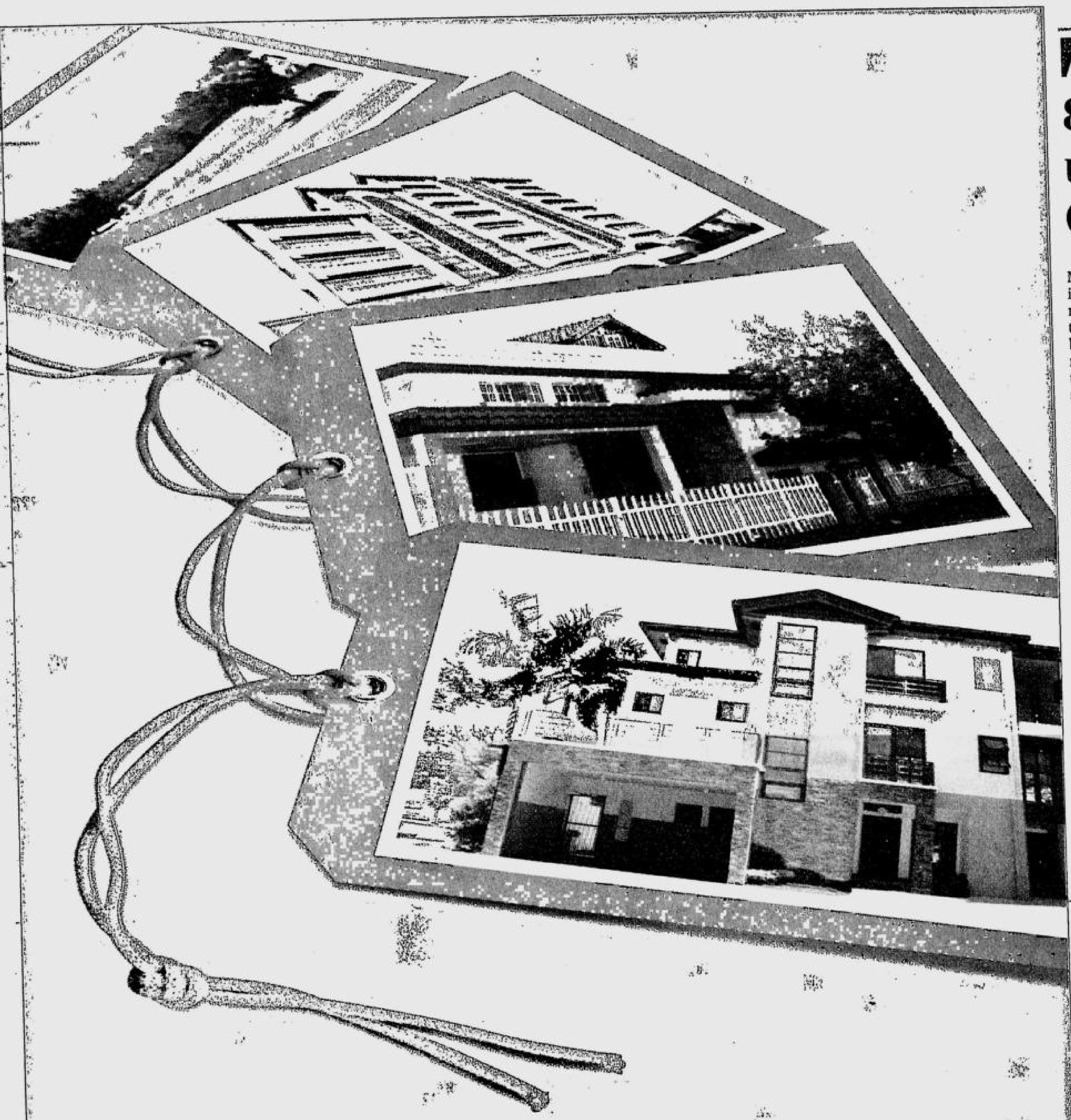

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83 crucial laws useless, says Cha-cha leader

MANY OF THE COUNTRY'S LAWS, INCLUDing those providing for countryside development, environmental protection and educational reform, are useless or unenforceable because they lack provisions for funding, a major proponent of the so-called people's initiative to amend the Philippine Constitution said yesterday.

Citing a preliminary survey by the House of Representatives' committee on oversight, Raul Lambino of Sigaw ng Bayan said, "At least 83 crucially important laws have been stranded because they remain unfunded, or have been under-funded to the tune of a total of P311 billion."

Among these unfunded or under-funded laws, according to Lambino, are the Veterans' Benefits Act; the magna cartas for scientists, small farmers, and disabled persons; the Social Reforms and Poverty Alleviation Act; the Countrywide Industrialization Act; the Magna Carta for Public School Teachers; and the Higher Education Modernization Act.

"Under the presidential system of government, the chief executive may have his or her own agenda, and the House and the Senate may also have their own programs," Lambino said in a press statement. "This is highly regressive. This is why we have stranded laws."

Lambino said that in a parliamentary system the natural convergence of executive and legislative priorities would yield a single unified agenda.

"The blending of executive and legislative capabilities under a parliamentary regime will ensure the proper funding and expeditious execution of all statutes," Lambino said.

Lambino is a member of the Charter-change Advocacy Commission and was a member of Malacañang's Constitutional Commission that drafted a proposed new constitution.

Norman Bordadora

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, May 2, 2006
3rd Week of Easter
Athanasius

1st Reading:	**Acts 7:51-8:1**
Gospel:	**John 6:30-35**

The people said to Jesus, "Show us miraculous signs, that we may see and believe you. What sign do you perform? Our ancestors ate manna in the desert; as Scripture says: They were given bread from heaven to eat."

Jesus then said to them, "Truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven. My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. The bread God gives is the One who comes from heaven and gives life to the world." And they said to him, "Give us this bread always."

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall never be hungry, and whoever believes in me shall never be thirsty."

Commentary

Stephen, one of the deacons and the first martyr, is stoned to death for preaching fearlessly of Jesus. He lived like Jesus, caring for the poor and preaching Good News; and he dies like Jesus, with the words of forgiveness of his enemies on his lips and entrusting his life to God the Father. Jesus too gives of his bread, his truth, his life to his community, and is the Bread of life given for us/to us. When we come to this Bread of Life, as Stephen did, it transforms our life and we begin to live forever, even as death may claim us.

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Workers ...

From page A1

all May Day rallies.

Demonstrations were planned in major cities across Indonesia, with up to 50,000 people expected in the capital alone to protest government plans to revise a labor law. The new law would cut severance packages and introduce more flexible contracts that would chip away at worker security.

"Don't change the law," thousands of laborers chanted at Jakarta's main downtown roundabout, as others arrived in buses and trucks, waving green, yellow and red flags and banners expressing their demands.

About 13,000 police were deployed on the streets, some carrying riot shields and manning water cannons, said Maj. Gen. Firman Ganisaid, the police chief.

Embassies and companies told foreigners to stay away from the demonstrations, though there were no reports of incidents by midday.

In Cambodia, thousands of police brought the capital, Phnom Penh, to a virtual standstill during a government clampdown on an unauthorized May Day demonstration.

Opposition leader Sam Rainsy said police detained a protest organizer for two hours after hundreds of workers gathered on Russian Boulevard—a main road into the capital—seeking to march through the city.

The government had denied permission for the rally, allowing only one official May Day demonstration at Chenla theater, and police with riot shields and batons physically prevented protesters from marching.

"Cambodia still lacks real democracy," Sam Rainsy said. "There is no real respect for human rights."

Thousands of garment factory workers rallied in Bangladesh to demand the United States and Europe drop tariffs on their products, saying they could eventually cause the industry's collapse.

Other laborers wound through the streets of the capital, Dhaka, banging drums and singing as they called for better working conditions in the country's dangerous factories.

"No more death in factories," they chanted. And "we want duty-free access."

In South Korea, protesters demanded equal status and protection for all workers, and vowed to thwart a government plan to negotiate a free trade agreement with the United States. Critics say the pact will cost jobs.

Russia

In Russia, hundreds of thousands of people took part in May Day rallies as labor unions and workers across Europe held events to protest unemployment, poor working conditions and low wages.

In other countries activists used the day to complain about their governments or the international situation.

Official events staged by the ruling pro-United Russia party overshadowed traditional protest marches by the opposition communists in Russia.

In the capital Moscow, 25,000 people gathered opposite the mayor's office in the central Tverskaya Street to hear speeches from trade union leaders and the mayor and listen to a concert, the Itar-Tass news agency reported.

The communists marched from a square where there is a statue of Lenin to their usual rallying spot opposite the Bolshoi Theater by a statue to Karl Marx, NTV television reported. Overall, 1.5 million people participated in May Day rallies in Russia.

In Germany, labor unions protested the impact of globalization on Europe's largest economy, accusing firms of sacrificing jobs for quick profit and urging the government to introduce a minimum wage.

Michael Sommer, the head of Germany's main union federation, complained that in addition to high unemployment, Germany had a growing army of people earning miserable wages, despite strong business profits.

"We don't want American conditions," Sommer said at a rally in Wolfsburg, home of car maker Volkswagen AG. "It is really time to stop this madness. Those in government must show creativity instead of putting new thumbscrews on the long-term unemployed."

Years of slow economic growth and massive job cuts by German firms have pushed up unemployment in Germany—it now stands at 11.5 percent—undermining government finances and the country's generous welfare state.

Turkey

In Istanbul, Turkish police detained some 40 protesters who were shouting slogans against the International Monetary Fund and the United States.

The protesters in Taksim Square were members of the Turkish Communist Party, the Labor Party and a group that called itself "Struggle." They did not have a permit for a May Day demonstration, although other large protests did have.

The group refused police demands to disperse, and police fired pepper spray and tear gas at the crowd. Footage broadcast on CNN-Turk showed protesters fighting with police and one protester cowering in a bus as a police officer beat him with his fists.

About 2,000 opposition supporters gathered in the Belarusian capital, Minsk, in a show of defiance after the jailing of the opposition's leadership by the authoritarian government.

The wife of Alexander Milinkevich, Inna Kulei, told the crowd she had visited her husband in prison, where the jail authorities had moved all the opposition leaders to separate cells, and refused to answer her inquiries about his health.

"You can't smother freedom, you can't kill it. These senseless repressions by the authorities only bring the day of freedom closer," she said. *AP*

"What's new pussycat?"

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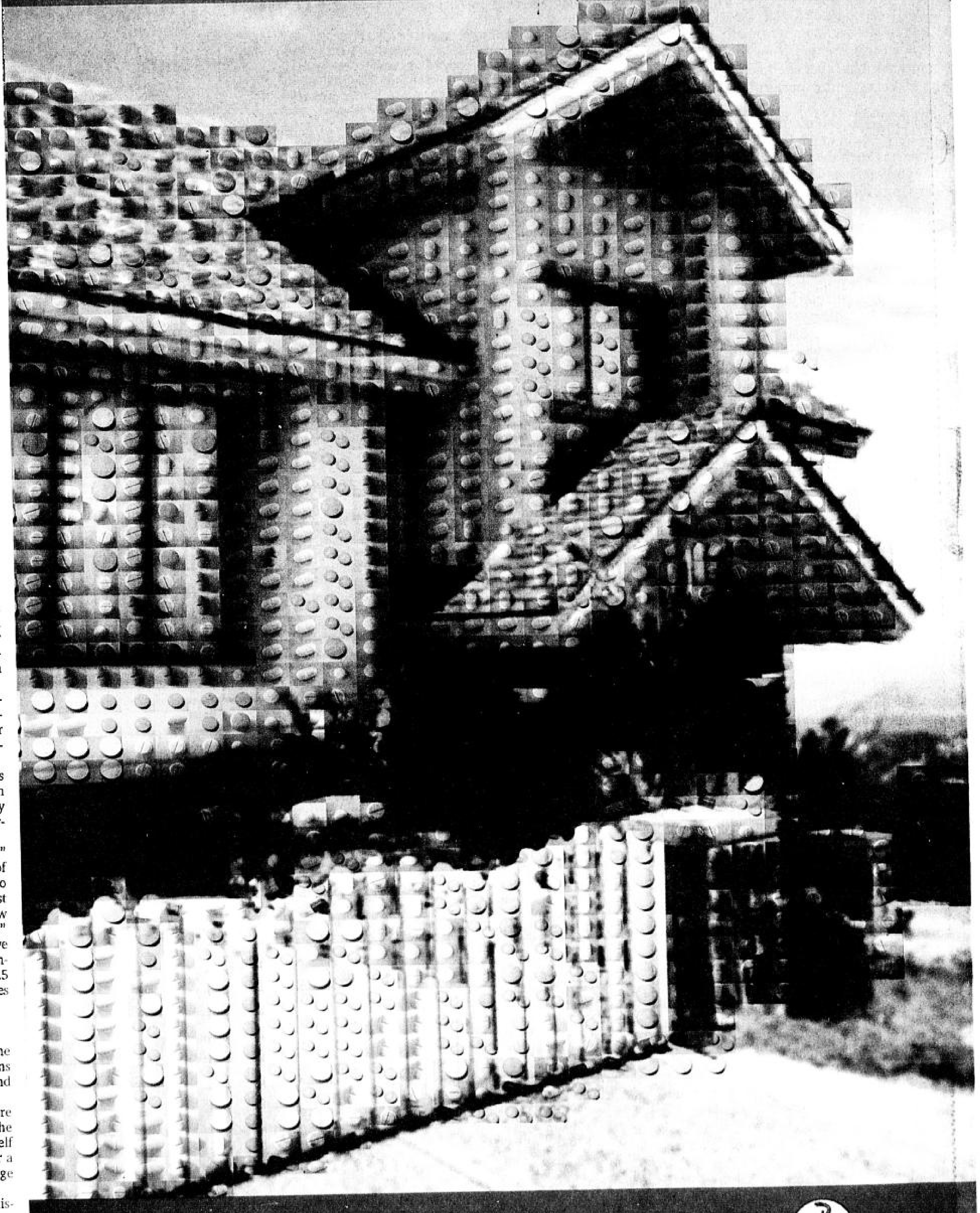

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ISSN 0116-2642
INQUIRER
Vol. 21 No. 143

OPINION

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THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INC. has its business and editorial offices at
•Chino Roces Ave corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
•P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
•Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4807
•Circulation 527-3342 / 527-3348 / 528-0183 / 528-0186 and 528-0213 / Fax: 528-02-34.
•Circulation Customer Service Hotline 896-6000

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Diminishing space

EDITORIAL

LAST EASTER SUNDAY, PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo announced that all death row convicts would be spared and the maximum penalty commuted to life imprisonment. Later, after her decision met with a strong reaction from those in favor of the death penalty, she said that she had always been for the abolition of the maximum punishment.

The President has been very vocal about her stand about abolishing the maximum penalty for death convicts, but she has been deafeningly silent on the killings of militants and activists. Aren't militants and activists human beings, too, like death convicts? And isn't the life of a militant as valuable as the life of a single convict?

Since Ms Arroyo took over as President, 124 leaders and members of party-list groups, militants and activists have been killed. This year alone, 17 have been slain. The latest victims were Jayson Delen, Bayan Muna-Camarines Norte secretary general, who was shot dead by two men on a motorcycle; and Jim Mirafuentes, a member of Bayan Muna in Daraga, Albay, who was shot in the head, neck and chest by two unidentified men.

Robert de Castro, Bayan Muna national deputy secretary general, immediately linked the latest two killings to the statement of Lt. Gen. Pedro Cabuay, Southern Luzon Command chief, that "the insurgency problem in Bicol has been cleaned up." De Castro said he was afraid that Cabuay was referring "to us, the legitimate organizations."

The 124 killed in the past five years were either members of party-list groups such as Bayan Muna and Anakpawis, people's organizations like Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) and the peasant group Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) or human rights workers, according to the human rights group Karapatan.

Referring specifically to the cases of slain Bayan Muna members, Rep. Satur Ocampo said the circumstantial evidence in these murders pointed to the military's involvement in the killings. Marie Hilao-Enriquez, Karapatan secretary general, said they believed that the killings were not isolated incidents. She said: "We see a pattern. These are systematic killings, probably part of government policy [against militants]."

The killings have not escaped the notice of the US State Department. In its annual human rights report, posted on the US Embassy website, it said: "Killings of community activists, church workers, lawyers and members of leftist political parties, particularly the left-wing political party Bayan Muna, increased during the year [2005]."

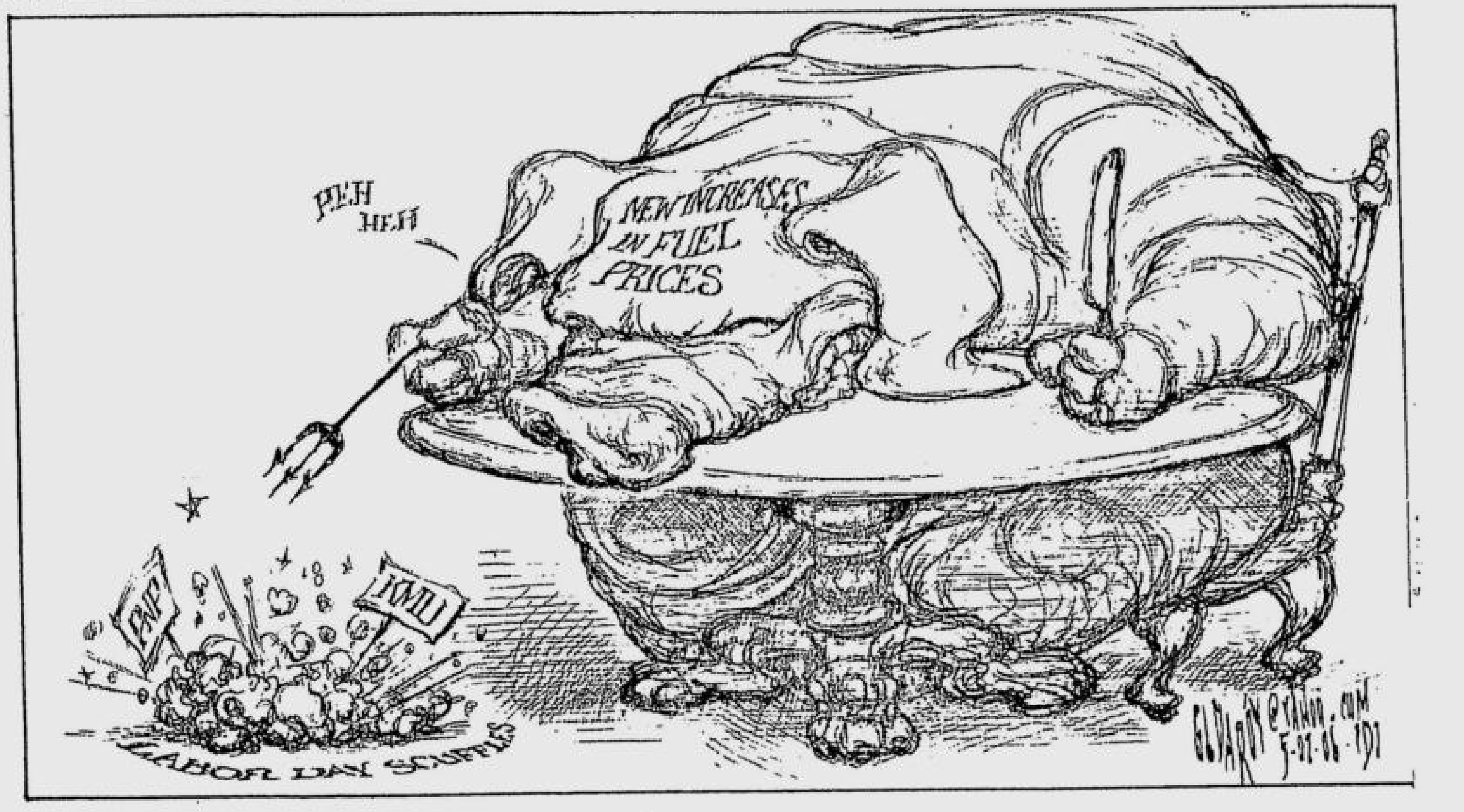
The US State Department said that "pervasive weakness in the rule of law, official impunity and the wide disparity between rich and poor contributed to cynicism about official justice."

Right after democracy was restored with the ouster of the dictator Ferdinand Marcos and the accession to the presidency of Corazon Aquino, there was a move to widen the democratic space. Leftist groups that used to wage their struggle underground were encouraged to go aboveground and to wage a parliamentary fight instead of a bloody war. But now, if the slaying of scores of militants and activists is any indication, that policy seems to have been abandoned.

The Arroyo administration and the military, of course, always deny that the killing of militants and activists is now state policy. They say that it could be a case of leftists killing leftists. But why should leftists do that when they need more warm bodies to wage their aboveground and parliamentary fight more effectively?

The killings of militants and activists do not seem to bother the high officials of the government, President Arroyo the chief among them. The President has at least made some gestures and announcements about going after the killers of journalists, but there has been no peep from her about the slaying of militants. On the contrary, she has promoted and decorated suspected masterminds of the killings, like former Col. Jovito Palparan Jr. who was promoted to major general in a matter of years and was even awarded the Distinguished Service Star.

The President has been very vocal about abolishing the maximum penalty and commuting the sentences of death convicts. If she's not being hypocritical and if she wants to be consistent in her stand on the death penalty, she should order the military to stop the extrajudicial killings of militants and activists. At the very least, the militants and activists, if indeed they have committed crimes, are entitled to due process before they are condemned to death.



Those hapless messengers

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

TOMORROW, MAY 3, WE MARK "WORLD Press Freedom Day (WPFD) for the 13th time since the United Nations established the day in 1993. Where do we stand? They still kill the messengers. "Though it be honest, it is never good to bring bad news," Shakespeare's courier wails.

Since 1986, the Freedom Fund for Filipino Journalists reports, 57 newsmen have been murdered. The Marcos dictatorship didn't bother to count. Tallies began only after People Power I.

Worldwide, 150 journalists were killed in the line of duty in 2005 alone, International Federation of Journalists data show. The Iraq conflict has claimed 60 lives so far.

"This is the largest annual number of media professionals killed in recorded history," Unesco director general Koichiro Matsuura notes. "This (is) a tragic continuation of a trend that has been rising over the past several years. Being a journalist is very dangerous and, sadly, is becoming more so."

Thus, the UN selected a Lebanese TV newscaster, maimed in a terror attack, to receive the 2006 Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize. May Chidiac lost one of her hands and her left leg in a car bomb incident.

The Cano Prize is named after a Colombian editor who was assassinated in 1987, after he exposed drug lords in his country. It forms part of WPFD rites.

The body count, however, tells only part of the problem. Journalism is a "vocation" committed to ferreting and reporting the news. The process often raises hackles of governments and vested interests who'd suppress information on specious grounds.

"Necessity is the plea of every infringement of human freedom," Parliamentarian William Pitt once observed. "It is the argument of tyrants. It is the creed of slaves."

The argument of necessity saw more than 500 journalists arrested last year for doing their jobs, the World Association of News notes. Some highlights:

- Pius Njawe of Cameroon has been arrested 126 times for spurning censors or manipulation. His most intense pain came "from not being able to protect my family during my imprisonment."
- The Myanmar military junta imprisoned journalist San San Nwe for seven years. Editor U Win Tin has spent 16 years in Rangoon jails. San San Nwe tells how international coverage helped.
- Iranian editor Akbar Ganji was jailed for six years. Raul Rivero spent two years behind bars in Cuba. Many of his colleagues remain in prison. But there's been no word about Abdullah Ali al-Sanussi al-Darrat, who was jailed in Libya in 1973. If alive, he'd be the longest imprisoned journalist.
- Journalist Shi Tao filed a story for New York-based Chinese Democracy Forum. The story was about the propaganda instructions that the Chinese government imposed on newspapers on the anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre. Shi Tao was jailed after Yahoo passed, on his account, the details to the Chinese authorities.

Those who target the press in Mexico, Colombia and the Philippines "are local politicians accused of corruption, and drug-traffickers." notes Ignacio Gomez of Columbia's Foundation for Press Freedom. "The judicial system is so inefficient and impunity is so high, it becomes easy to kill journalists."

Gags on media remain in North Korea, Cuba, Syria, among other countries, says the International Press Institute. Mullahs, who straddle Iran's courts, padlocked 10 dailies and four magazines that called for democratic reforms.

Censorship resembles "standing water," to swipe a William Blake image. "(They) breed reptiles of the mind."

There's a new nettlesome issue: press cartoons can kill. Danish cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad triggered riots in Indonesia, Iran and other countries.

"Much of Islamic literature about Muhammad is hagiographic, i.e., unstinting in praise," writes BBC's Arab Affairs analyst, Magdi Abdelhadi. It contrasts with another Islamic tradition, based on the Koranic verse: "Say: 'I am but a man like yourselves.'"

There's been confusion between the Islamic ban on any pictorial representation and respect for the Prophet. It illustrates the gap between the West's secular liberal values and the Middle Eastern societies' predominantly religious outlook.

"Part of the Western consensus is that poking fun at religious figures is acceptable," Magdi Abdelhadi adds. "Some Muslim activists ... are determined to redefine the boundaries of that consensus"—and the press is where the clash occurs.

In Asean, "the Philippines has the longest history of press freedom." But it has not been a bed of roses under some presidents. Marcos padlocked the press. Estrada tried to cow it by economic pressure. And Macapagal-Arroyo used imagined "special powers" to muffle dissident voices.

"A number of fools and villains carry press cards," Sun Star points out. "Some of us are slipshod, corrupt even. We over-cover the trivial, under-report the difficult. Far too many substitute easy cynicism for solid reporting."

Can furthering press freedom also assist in assuring the right to be free from poverty, Unesco asks. More than a billion people live on less than $1 per day. Can that number be halved, as the first of eight Millennium Development Goals suggests, by 2015?

The Philippines and 175 other countries stressed, at the 2005 World Summit on the Information Society held in Tunisia, that "freedom of expression and the free flow of information, ideas and knowledge are essential for development."

Now, if they'd just stop shooting the messengers. That would do for a start.

Moving on

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

WHAT DO THE SUPREME COURT'S DECISION to junk EO 464 and the calibrated preventive response and the Stop Cha Cha movement's unveiling last Friday have in common?

Two things.

First, they are both a cause for elation. The junking of EO 464 by a vote of 14-0 and the CPR by a vote of 13-0 shows the justices at their finest. It restores confidence in a battered justice system and offers hope that the law in this country may finally find its natural connection to justice. I've already said my piece about the Supreme Court ruling on 464—that oppression should never have been allowed to exist in the first place and should have been struck down by the justices both of the courts of law and public opinion the very instant it reared its very ugly head. But better late than never.

Better late than never as well to laud the Supreme Court for what it did a few days later, which was to remove from our faces another humongous oppression in the form of CPR. That, too, should have been struck down the very instant it reared its head, without waiting for its effects to unfold on the very day devoted to celebrating People Power, which was its 20th anniversary, a milestone hailed round the world, when the PNP cut down rallies for being seditious. But thank the justices for showing enlightenment however overdue. Truly, they must have heeded GMA's injunction to discern good and evil.

"Brazen" was the word Joaquin Bernas used to describe EO 464 and it's just as apt a word to describe CPR. The brazenness of the first became patent when Vice Adm. Mateo Mayuga cleared Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon and company of rigging the 2004 elections while the chilling effect of that gag order lay on everyone's tongue. And the brazenness of the second became patent when political adviser Gabriel Claudio said that, unlike Thailand whose prime minister resigned out of public furor over his existence, we did not have people protesting GMA on the streets—this while the cops were routinely beating up marchers and calling it calibrated.

The gathering at Club Filipino last Friday to stop Cha-cha, which drew in a good group of bishops and businessmen was as well a cause for elation. It was a forceful way to halt a runaway train (that had the people for its passengers) about to jump off at the end of the tracks. The "Stop" in "Stop Chacha!" hit the nail on the head, encapsulating as it did the sentiments of the majority of the population: "*Sa tamang oras at paraan.*" (At the right time in the right way.) Debating the shift to a parliamentary system and federalism has its place in the sun—but not this time, not this way. The problem is not the Charter, it is the usurper. The solution is not to change the Charter, it is to change the leader.

Which brings me to the other thing that the Supreme Court decision to strike down EO 464 and CPR and the bishops' and businessmen's decision to launch "Stop Chacha!" have in common. They are also a source of chagrin.

That they are a source of elation and chagrin at the same time is not entirely paradoxical. They are a source of chagrin because they highlight one thing, which is the amount of effort we all need to take just to stop the impositions and oppressions that are springing from the head of a non-president faster than the speed of counting fake votes. Which is the heroic exertions we all need to make just to be able to get us back to the starting line, that starting line being what we accomplished with the two Edsas—the last putting an ungrateful GMA in power—which was to restore freedom and decency to this country.

Since late last year, GMA has stopped being on the defensive and has gone on offensive, unleashing, among other things those three atrocities, two of which the Supreme Court has stopped, and one of which the bishops and businessmen, along with other groups, are trying to stop. It's all very nice that we have stopped them, or are in the process of stopping them, but what does that say about us? Are we now simply content to stop every atrocity GMA unleashes and feel good about ourselves for doing so? If that is the case, then we are not only going to have never-ending divisiveness, as GMA herself predicted if she became president, we are going to have never-ending insufferableness. What the Supreme Court decisions and the Stop Chacha movement in fact only prove is this: The problem is Gloria. The solution is to stop Gloria.

It's no small irony that GMA's supporters should keep using that line "Let's move on," when the last thing this country is able to do is move. We have been condemned to go round and round in circles or, like Sisyphus, to push a rock up a mountain only to see it fall back again and again. I agree: Let's move on. Let's move on by removing the one huge obstacle that lies in our path. Let's move on by smashing the shackles that prevent us from moving. Removing GMA won't solve everything, but it sure as hell will solve a great many things. Removing GMA won't naturally make us advance, but it sure as hell will bring us to a point where we may be able to.

I've repeatedly offered a way to move on. That is snap elections. We cannot move on because we have an illegitimate president, we can move on by having a legitimate president. That is done by snap elections. I have little doubt that if everyone will unite on that one simple and logical call, it can and will be carried out. I propose in this light that in lieu of, or alongside, "Stop Cha-Cha!," we form an alliance called "Snap Gloria!." The "Snap" there meaning "Say No to A Phony." That is one coalition that will have the blessings of 65 percent of the population.

Let's stop hacking at the branches. Let's remove the root of the problem once and for all.

Snap Gloria!

Samar priests vs Marcosian tactics

COMMENTARY

Lutgardo B. Barbo
Ateneo School of Government

THE EASTERN SAMAR COLLECTION OF SIGNATURES for Cha-cha through "people's initiative," a.k.a government initiative, is anathema to good governance because it was attended by fraud and misinformation when it was gathered. There are reports that the Commission on Elections, showing unquestionable canine loyalty and obedience, has proceeded to "verify" the signatures.

Both the collection and verification violate truth, propriety and decency. In a word, the two "people's initiatives" bear all the earmarks of a Marcosian sleight of hand.

It is heartwarming to note, though, that the clergy of the Diocese of Borongan is not taking the Cha-cha signature campaign lying down. As reported by the INQUIRER in its Apr. 23 issue, Bishop Leonardo Medroso and 58 priests have issued a pastoral letter criticizing the whole "circus" for "deceit and misinformation." The letter, titled "The Truth Will Set You Free," was read in all the parishes of the diocese on Sunday following its issuance. In a detailed account, it told of how, in broad daylight, government leaders pulled the wool over the eyes of "*probinsyanos*."

In some places, signatures were taken from PhilHealth registration lists and from the attendance sheets of Agriculture and Fishery Council meetings. In quite a number of instances, people were assured of a healthier economy and promised better-paying jobs, better life, even solutions to personal problems. Government resources, not the least those of the Department of the Interior and Local Government, were seen being used for the signature campaign, even as money changed hands. Not a few local officials openly admitted that they solicited signatures with the "No-EL" in mind.

In echoing more clearly the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines' position on Charter change, Bishop Medroso and his priests showed moral courage that should be salutary and inspiring to other bishops and priests and to those opposing Cha-cha.

Today's people's initiatives reminded me of two past incidents.

The first incident goes back to the time I was still in law school. Supreme Court Chief Justice Roberto Concepcion, our professor in Constitutional Law, was explaining to us why he had to retire prematurely and in protest. He believed that the "referendum" on the Marcos Constitution—as recorded in photos of raised hands in barangay assemblies—was not constitutional, and did not prove anything—despite the Court's dispositive ruling that "...there is no more legal obstacle to the 1973 Constitution being considered in force and effect." He said that President Marcos tried to influence, and not so subtly, the justices' decision on the matter through bribery and threats.

The second incident happened when I was the provincial governor of Eastern Samar. One of the infamous Comelec commissioners involved in the 1971 Constitutional Convention payola, who prided himself in being a member of the circle of confidants of the dictator's First Lady, visited me at the Governor's official residence. Without so much prodding, and with gleeful demeanor, he confessed his "electoral sins" and narrated how they ratified the 1973 Constitution. He said the abracadabra consisted of crisp commands—e.g., "Raise your hands if you need three kilos of rice and sardines," or, "Your hands up higher if you want *pamasahe*." Or, short queries like: "Do you want to go home now? Stand up and raise your hands" or, "Do you want to see how beautiful the First Lady is? Hands up all of you." And then the ubiquitous Comelec cameras would zoom in and take pictures to record the "voting." The farcical constitutional referendum in 1973 is now the deceitful signature campaign to amend the 1987 Constitution. One can't miss the striking sense of déjà vu.

It is not surprising to see Eastern Samar's religious leaders signing up to be counted and risked being listed in the military's order of battle as enemies of state. They may have been encouraged by a fellow priest and a future saint—Monsignor Donato B. Guinbaolibot,—who is highly regarded and held in great esteem by both the religious and lay people in the province. He was the pious and holy parish priest of Balangiga, Eastern Samar during the Philippine-American War. To recall, Balangiga was where the mightiest army in the world suffered an ignominious defeat in the hands of Eastern Samareños fighting for their freedom. He is the only priest in Samar and Leyte who has a monument erected in his memory. That statute stands on the western lawn of the centuries-old Guiuan Parish Church. In fact, this is the 10th year of the "Movement for the Beatification of Msgr. Donanto B. Guimbaolibot" which was launched on Dec. 8, 1995 to coincide with the fiesta and 400th Anniversary of the Christian Evangelization of his native town of Guiuan. ("The Balangiga Conflict Revisited," Rolando O. Borrinaga, 2003).

The Arroyo administration would be mistaken to ram down the throats of the unenlightened, downtrodden and underprivileged the idea of Cha-cha, by using dirty, Marcosian tactics. To paraphrase the French writer, Frederic Bastiat: When government authority and morality contradict each other, the citizen is left with the cruel alternatives of either showing contempt for authority, or losing his sense of morality, or both.

When this country disintegrates due to the unresolved conflict of authority and morality because of the controversial and divisive government Cha-cha initiative, then we are stuck fast with cruel alternatives.

Eastern Samar Bishop Medroso and his 58 priests is telling us, we need more than just prayers for us to have our deliverance.

Ilocano heritage

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

LAOAG—AS I WRITE THIS, THE LAUNCHING of this year's observance of National Heritage Month is about to take place in Paoay, with a concert at the famous Paoay Church. The concert will feature world-class pianist Cecile Licad, soprano Alexis Edralin, tenor Lemuel de la Cruz, flutist Christopher Oracion, pianist Mary Anne Espina, and new talent Bianca Montanez, who herself hails from Piddig, Ilocos Norte.

A group of media representatives, officials of the National Heritage Foundation and the National Commission on Culture and the Arts (NCCA) and their guests made the 14-hour trip by bus from Manila to Laoag. We made a stop in Vigan for lunch at Café Leona, which is famous for its distressed interiors on the ground floor of a grand *bahay na bato* as much as for its Ilocano specialties. Then we spent about an hour walking Vigan's cobblestone streets, ducking into the many souvenir and antique shops, and heartened by the numerous tourists, most of them locals, taking in the sights.

Upon entering Vigan, I was disheartened at the sight of garish shop signs and a new complex of fast food restaurants on one side of the once-quiet plaza fronting the Vigan Cathedral. One of our party asked a vendor for the location of Café Leona, and when he looked confused, tried to be helpful by mentioning that "it's the place where they serve Ilocano dishes." "Ah," he said, "you can try Max," referring to the branch of the fried chicken chain. "No," our companion insisted. "Where do the people of Vigan go for good food?" "Oh," her informant replied helpfully, "we all eat at Jollibee!"

If for nothing else, the exchange perhaps illustrates the need for such an event as National Heritage Month, if only to ensure that the rich culture of the past persists beyond the present day, and endures for at least the next generation, before it's swamped entirely by popular culture and mass consumerism.

* * *

UPON arrival at Fort Ilocandia, the massive hotel and resort complex that's now owned by Chinese interests, we rested awhile in our rooms before heading out for dinner.

Some of us proceeded to Paoay for dinner at Casa Doña Emilia, a small hotel owned by the Diaz family and managed by son Bobby. Just a few months old, Casa Doña Emilia is a charming edifice, designed along tropical-Mexican lines, with a small tinkling fountain greeting you in the open courtyard as you enter.

When we got there, a Diaz daughter, film director Marilou Diaz Abaya, was on the phone giving instructions to her crew who had lost their way to Paoay. Another daughter, Marissa, was busy attending to their guests, including Cecile Licad and her companions led by her local manager Pablo Tariman.

Also booked at the hotel were some Supreme Court justices, including Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban and his wife, who all had taken a break from their duties at the "summer capital" of Baguio to attend the Paoay fiesta and the Licad concert upon the invitation of Associate Justice Antonio Carpio, who hails from Paoay.

Thus talk over dinner shifted from culture and the arts, including the politics behind several controversies bedeviling art circles, to politics itself, as we all rushed to congratulate the "Chief" and express our appreciation for the high tribunal's fearless decisions of late. The pleasant evening was capped by a "nightcap" of the famous Ilocos *empanada*, which we were instructed to dip in tart *sukang Iloko* to attain the full gustatory experience.

* * *

IN AN ARTICLE in "Music News and Features," Tariman (who edits the publication and also regularly contributes to the INQUIRER on cultural matters) told a very interesting story about an encounter between Licad and a young performer.

"Five years ago," writes Tariman, "a wisp of a girl named Bianca, from Piddig, Ilocos Norte, traveled seven hours with her father, Esmond, to hear Cecile Licad perform in Tuguegarao City. The two met when the girl asked for an autograph and Licad ended up listening to the girl who happened to be a piano student. And so Licad gave her some advice, like working hard and to find a good teacher.

"She did, in the person of pianist Nita Abrogar Quinto. Within two years, the girl won a place in the National Music Competition for Young Artists and later a concerto competition in Metro Manila.

"If only to recall that meeting in Tuguegarao, Bianca will share the stage with her piano idol."

* * *

I LOOK forward to seeing these artists, as well as the other performers, at the concert at the Paoay Church to launch National Heritage Month. Might we be witnessing the debut of a promising artist of the same caliber as Licad?

I look forward as well to the rest of our visit to Ilocos Norte—including tours of Paoay, Sarrat, Batac, San Nicolas and Laoag; and visits to *inabel* or Ilocano weaving shops, ancestral homes, and of course the Marcos Shrine. The launching of National Heritage Month will be capped with a grand fireworks display by the Paoay Lake, which should provide entertainment to everyone within gaping distance.

Because of the distance from Manila, Ilocos Sur and Ilocos Norte remain somewhat off the beaten track of domestic tourism. But gradually, local tourists are beginning to widen their reach, with the historic charms of Vigan, the heritage churches of Ilocos Norte, and the beaches of Pagudpud offering compelling attractions. But as they cash in on a possible tourism boom, local governments should also remember that in their eagerness to welcome the hordes, they shouldn't lose sight of the fact that it is precisely the uniqueness and the storied history of Ilocano heritage that draws in visitors. Protecting, preserving and promoting that heritage is part of their mandate.

After Annan

WORLD VIEW

Shashi Tharoor

WHO WILL SUCCEED KOFI ANNAN AS UNITED Nations secretary general is a hot question among diplomats.

"The most impossible job on earth" was how the first UN Secretary General, Trygve Lie, described the post in 1953. Time has not made the job any easier.

The framers of the UN Charter gave the secretary general two distinct functions: "chief administrative officer of the Organization" and also an independent official with whom the General Assembly and Security Council can entrust certain, unspecified (but implicitly political) tasks. Each holder of the office must demonstrate whether he is more secretary than general.

The secretary general is expected to enjoy the backing of governments, especially the five permanent members of the Security Council, but be above partiality. He establishes his credentials by bureaucratic or diplomatic service but, once elected, must transcend his past and serve as a voice of the world, like a "secular Pope."

The secretary general is entrusted with assisting member-states to make sound and well-informed decisions, which he is then obliged to execute. True, the secretary general has an unparalleled agenda—shaping authority. But he does not have the power to execute all his ideas, and he articulates a vision that only governments can fulfill. He moves the world, but he cannot direct it.

It was Dag Hammarskjold, Lie's successor, who, at the height of the Cold War, first argued that an impartial civil servant could be "politically celibate" without being "politically virgin." The secretary general could play a political role without losing his impartiality, provided he hewed faithfully to the Charter and to international law.

With the Cold War's end, Kofi Annan has gone further than his predecessors in using the "bully pulpit" of his office. He boldly raised the question of the morality of intervention and the duty of the individual to follow his conscience, and he challenged member-states to resolve the tensions between state sovereignty and their responsibility to protect ordinary people.

Often, a secretary general can raise an awkward question but not dictate the appropriate answer; Annan's historic speech to the General Assembly in 1999 on intervention set a thousand flowers blooming at think-tanks and among op-ed columnists, but it has not led to a single military intervention to protect the oppressed. The UN is often seen embodying international legitimacy, yet the secretary general's pronouncements often have less impact on the conduct of member-states than the Pope's strictures on birth control.

The secretary general knows that he can accomplish little without the support of members whose inaction on one issue or another he might otherwise want to denounce. He cannot afford to allow frustration on any one issue to affect his ability to elicit cooperation from governments on a range of others. Annan once made the point by citing an old Ghanaian proverb: "Never hit a man on the head when you have your fingers between his teeth."

Today's single-superpower world also means that the secretary general must manage a relationship that is vital to the UN's survival without mortgaging his own integrity and independence. The insistent demands of some for the UN to prove its utility to the United States—demands that could not have been made in the same terms during the Cold War—oblige a secretary general to walk a tightrope between heeding US priorities and the preferences of the membership as a whole. Paradoxically, he can be most useful to the United States when he demonstrates his independence from it.

Member-states' increasing micro-management of budgets has also weakened the secretary general's authority. Both Annan and his predecessor, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, embarked on ambitious administrative reforms, but were unable to address the far greater levels of procedural and regulatory inertia in areas under the authority of the member-states.

No secretary general has enjoyed real independence from governments: the UN operates without embassies or intelligence services, and member-states resist any attempt to acquire such capabilities. A secretary general's reach thus cannot exceed his grasp, and his grasp cannot extend across the member-states' frontiers—or their pocketbooks.

Indeed, today, the secretary general commands great diplomatic legitimacy—even greater media visibility—but less political power than the UN Charter suggests. To be effective, he must be skilled at managing staff and budgets, gifted at public diplomacy (and its behind-the-scenes variant), and able to engage the loyalties of a wide array of external actors, including non-governmental organizations, business groups and journalists.

He also must convince the nations of the poor and conflict-ridden South that their interests are uppermost in his mind, while ensuring that he can work effectively with the wealthy and powerful North. He must recognize the power and the prerogatives of the Security Council, especially its five permanent members, while staying attentive to the priorities and passions of the General Assembly. And he must present member-states with politically achievable proposals and implement his mandates within the means they provide him.

Above all, the secretary general needs a vision of the higher purpose of his office and an awareness of its potential and limitations. In other words, to be successful, he must conceive and project a vision of the UN as it should be, while administering and defending the organization as it is. Truly an impossible job. ***Project Syndicate***

Shashi Tharoor is UN Under Secretary General and author of a collection of literary essays, "Bookless in Baghdad."

Regards

YOUNG BLOOD

Dimitri Asuncion

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

DEAR DOC,

You've probably had enough of me by now. I'm assuming I'm the last person you want to hear from. You might not admit it for fear of offending me, but I must say that what I am thinking is less speculative than a mere guess. All my life I've been working to read other people's thoughts, hoping that if I concentrated hard enough I'd have the magical ability to read minds.

I saw you in the movie theater three Sundays ago as you were about to watch "The Chronicles of Narnia." I was wearing a Hilfiger shirt with blue stripes, a pair of Chuck Taylors and a New York Yankee cap. Your shirt resembled mine, except that the blue stripes were wider and you obviously weren't in hip-hop attire. In case you noticed me, you were probably wondering what the heck I was there for, and whether you could spare yourself some awkward moments if I (or you) were to acknowledge that we were in the same place.

You didn't have to worry; I spared us both from an interaction that would have gone God knows where. No words were necessary. I suppose it's strange enough to see one of your patients outside your office, when you're trying to spend "quality time" with your family. Heck, I wouldn't want to see my boss in a reunion with aunts and uncles. But it must be even more uncomfortable when the patient is a self-confessed nut case like me.

We met last March during my very first psychotherapy session, when I didn't even know what that meant. (Seems so long ago, doesn't it?) What happened that day, I don't expect you to remember, for first impressions are often blurred by eventual familiarity.

But I bet you can recall how the last session went. It happened five months later on a humid Thursday afternoon. I had taken a long but enjoyable 15-minute walk to your office. There's nothing like hopping along Makati Avenue in an Old Navy shirt and dirty sneakers while robots in business suits go on with their swift, intelligent march. I had never looked worse, literally. My hands were bleeding from self-inflicted cuts, my face looked pale, my eyes droopy from sleeplessness, and my hair—oh God, the long unruly hair on my scalp that sprouted in a thousand different directions—let's just say I was a mess.

Coming off perhaps the worst day of my life, I gave you a telephone call. "Doc, it's me," I said. "If you're free, I'd like to set an appointment tomorrow."

"Didn't I tell you to call me when you think about hurting yourself?" you demanded to know.

I knew that you knew, and that my mother had told you. But I asked because I wanted to hear your concern, to hear that you cared. What are doctors for if beyond the tests, analyses and prescriptions, they don't affirm a serious interest in their patients' well-being? The phone call was not so much about having you mark your calendar as making you acknowledge that something wrong had happened, and that you gave a damn. It always feels good to hear somebody telling you to take care.

When I went for that last session, I didn't get much of a reaction from you, and for some reason it disappointed me. You were your usual composed and understanding self, nonchalantly pushing buttons on your new Communicator as if 20-year-olds with dried blood on their fingers were a normal sight. I suspect you studied all this. Were you aware that the depressed were not the kind to give a rat's ass about their physical appearance? Did you know other people with suicidal tendencies and their enervated laziness? Was your strategy not to comment so quickly on their injuries—both physical and mental—so you didn't prompt them to press on with their mad entreaties?

Initially, I thought you weren't that great a doctor. You weren't the old sage with white hair I imagined you would look like or the Malcolm Crowe character Bruce Willis played. You were just a middle-aged man who hung his diplomas and certificates on the wall, with a fairly decent jazz collection in his shelf, and who had that low dry cough from smoking. You were 20 minutes late for our first session, too, a practice I can't ascribe to gurus.

But you did your job perfectly. And this I came to believe more and more. And as far as the nature of your profession is concerned, it is actually less scandalous and traumatic than what society would have people believe. My experience shattered my preconceived notions about mental illness and the humiliation of undergoing treatment.

There are still times when I felt I am simply your charity case, a lost boy who happened to graduate from your alma mater. It didn't help that I kept saying I was broke. But you carried on, partly because you knew what our school motto meant but mostly because I made myself out to be such a sorry figure that I left you with no choice at all.

You never really needed anything from me, and though I probably drove you to the limits of your sympathy, believe me when I say I'm a lot less comfortable with the position. I have a huge ego, and nothing deflates it more than tying myself to anyone because I couldn't help myself. I'm no victim. Or am I?

Three Sundays ago, therefore, I avoided talking to you. I've led myself to believe that we both have had enough of your altruism. Dodging your glances seemed to be better than engaging in a courteous chat. Pleasantries don't always do us good anyway, for they sometimes mask the truth. If you asked how I was doing, I'd have said , "Great." If you went on to say, "Look at you now, you have a job and everything. Let me introduce you to my kids," I would have answered, "It's such a pleasure to meet you. Enjoy the movie." And you would have march into the theater, clutching your boy's hand, to see C.S. Lewis' beloved masterpiece.

It's a lie. You'll see in my eyes that I'm not "better" like you have constantly worked to help me become. Although it was your hope that the day would come when I finally acquired some measure of "okayness," three Sundays ago wasn't that day.

It's a lie. When I talk to you, you'll notice the strain in my defeated voice, as well as the restlessness that has rendered me older but not mellower. I guess I just can't quit the sticky, sweet pleasure of being a tragedy.

It has been less than 10 months since my dazed, anxious entry into your life. In a frozen memory close to my heart, I hold on dearly to something that is true. "Regards," you always said, as if at all times and especially during my worst moments of lunacy, I would need your reminder that I take care. For all the word's customary uses, your version always seems to have a distinctive quality to it. It's a rare case of charity becoming agreeable to me despite my pride. I am like a hungry boy who gives in to the temptation to accept sweets offered him. For this at least, and in all its austerity, I will remain

Forever thankful,
Dimitri

Dimitri Asuncion, 21, is a project officer for an integrated marketing communications agency

'New life' for all

IN THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION, we send the President, our government officials and fellow Filipinos greetings of peace and new life.

- New life means peace and order, respecting human rights and upholding the dignity of all, including dissenters and militants.
- New life means more jobs for the people and living wages for those who are working, genuine land reform, and respect for the patrimony of indigenous people.
- New life means honest governance of the country, free from fund scams, money politics, and other forms of corruption.
- New life means freedom of expression and democracy, at all times for all, and no to media repression.
- New life means building trust among our people, instead of sowing suspicion by pushing Cha-cha at all costs to the point of manipulating "people's initiatives."
- New life means conscious and reflective participation of the people, conducive to social changes in society.
- New life means abiding with the proposed revamp of the present Commission on Elections.
- New life is expressed in the pastoral letter of the bishops exhorting the faithful into vigilance, education, principled opposition over the signature campaign endorsed by the government.

We share the same concern as the bishops, and we support and endorse their message.

We continue to pray for our country and may new life prevail in all of us!

—SIGNED BY 29 ICM SISTERS,
ICM Prayer House,
4 Recto St., Baguio City

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Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, 1200 Taguig City, Philippines
P.O. Box 2102 MCPO Tel. Nos. 893-6001 to 47 / 893-1320 Fax No. 840-1575
PNOC

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC - Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites interested contractors, registered with the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) and classified, at least, as Category C and D. IAC Small, Sub-Category B. Specialty in Electrical Works of General Building-Building & Industrial Plant and have completed within the last ten (10) years at least one (1) supply, delivery, installation testing and commissioning of electrical distribution system contract amounting to at least fifty percent (50%) of the approved budget, to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project:

SUPPLY, DELIVERY, INSTALLATION, TESTING AND COMMISSIONING OF THE COTABATO EXPANDED RURAL ELECTRIFICATION PROJECT
STAGE VII (2 BARANGAYS/6 SITIOS)
EDC 06-053

The Approved Budget is Php 5,580,546.42 chargeable against PNOC-EDC fund. The contract duration is 180 calendar days.

Application forms for eligibility and the bidding documents may be secured from the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group (c/o F.T. Tolibas local 5179) starting April 26, 2006 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Pesos: One Thousand (Php 1,000.00).

Site inspection is on May 10-11, 2006. For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on May 15, 2006, 2:00 p.m. at the BAC Conference Room, First Floor, Bldg. V. Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila.

Applications for eligibility and sealed bids shall be received by the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group, First Floor Building V, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila, not later than 2:00 p.m. (Contracts Administration Group Office Wall Clock Time) of May 23, 2006 and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter.

PNOC - EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to PNOC-EDC.

THE CHAIRMAN
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI—April 26 & May 2, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
MANILA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY
MIAA Administration Building, MIA Road, Pasay City, Metro Manila

RULES AND REGULATIONS IMPLEMENTING EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 341

Section 1. Mandate of Executive Order No. 341

Under Executive Order No. 341, the Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA) is authorized and directed to exercise administrative supervision and control over all international airports in the Philippines, and to formulate promote and implement a comprehensive and integrated program for the management, operation, maintenance and development of all international airports in the Philippines to internationally-accepted standards.

The MIAA, in consultation with the Secretary of the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) is authorized to issue rules and regulations for the effective implementation of the provisions of Executive Order No. 341.

Section 2. Coverage of these Rules and Regulations

These Rules and Regulations shall cover international airports which avail of and are granted the financial assistance fund provided by the MIAA in a comprehensive and integrated policy, plan and program for the management, operation, maintenance and development of such international airports in accordance with internationally-accepted standards.

The international airports which may apply and avail of the financial assistance fund are the Laoag International Airport, the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport, the Subic Bay International Airport, the Mactan-Cebu International Airport, the Francisco Bangoy International Airport, the General Santos International Airport, the Zamboanga International Airport, and such other international airports as may be established in the Philippines.

Section 3. Integrated Program and Development Plan

The MIAA, through its General Manager, shall formulate, promote and implement a comprehensive and integrated plan and program for the management, operation, maintenance and development of all international airports in the Philippines in accordance with internationally-accepted standards, to include but not be limited to the following:

1. Role of each international airport in the country's air transport system.
2. Capacities, facilities and equipment that must be provided for in each international airport in order to comply with international standards to enable it to realize its defined role in the country's air transport system.
3. Required investment program with careful regard to avoiding the twin evils of under investment or over investment.

Section 4. Financial Assistance

The MIAA shall extend and approve financial assistance in whatever form deemed appropriate to international airports which lack the needed resources to fund vital and urgent development projects consistent with the comprehensive and integrated plan and program it has formulated with provisions for the reasonable return to or recovery by MIAA of such financial assistance, except as otherwise provided.

The grant of any financial assistance, and the determination of the appropriate forms and amounts thereof, shall be subject to approval by the MIAA Board of Directors

Section 5. Powers and Duties of MIAA

The MIAA, through its General Manager, shall exercise and perform the following powers and duties relative to the international airport seeking financial assistance, in accordance with said comprehensive and integrated plan and program, to wit:

5.1 Provide, generate and make available a fixed annual financial assistance fund as may be determined by the MIAA Board of Directors necessary and proper for the implementation of the plans and programs in respect of the aided international airport.
5.2 Prescribe and attach such conditions and guidelines to said financial assistance to ensure recovery by MIAA of the funds expended for such financial assistance through among others, airport fees and charges, revenue generating ventures and cost-saving measures that the aided international airport shall impose, enter into or pass.
5.3 Control, supervise, construct, maintain, operate and provide such adequate resources, facilities or services as shall be necessary for the efficient functioning of the aided international airport in accordance with approved plans and programs.
5.4 Promulgate rules and regulations governing the planning, development, maintenance, operation and improvement of the aided international airport.
5.5 Formulate and approve the organizational and administrative structure, staffing pattern, operating and capital expenditures, and financial budget of the aided international airport.
5.6 Levy and collect dues, charges, fees or assessments for the use of airport premises, infrastructure works, appliances, facilities or concessions, or for any service provided by the aided international airport and/or retain and appropriate the same for such measures as may be necessary for the management operation, maintenance and development of the aided international airport.
5.7 Ensure that permits or concessions to do business within the aided international airport shall be in accordance with such rules and regulations to be promulgated by the MIAA for the purpose.
5.8 Conduct quality, safety and performance audits and reviews of the aided international airport on a periodic basis to ascertain variances between established standards and actual performance, and determine necessary measures to address the variances.
5.9 Ascertain the efficacy and efficiency by which projects and programs, service goals and objectives of the aided international airport are implemented and met, and to prescribe remedial policies and measures to improve performances services based on objectives.
5.10 Review and approve the procurement of infrastructure projects, goods and services of the aided international airport.
5.11 Generally, to exercise all the functions and powers necessary or incidental to attain the purposes and objectives of Executive Order No. 341.

Section 6. Powers and Duties of MIAA General Manager

As provided under Executive Order No. 341, and as delegated by the MIAA, its General Manager shall have the following powers and duties with respect to the aided international airport:

6.1 Act directly on any matter involving the management, operation, maintenance and development of the aided international airport.
6.2 Direct any official of the aided international to perform his duty or restrain the commission of an act.
6.3 Review, approve, reverse or modify acts and decisions of the boards and/or officials or units of the aided international airport authorities.
6.4 Determine priorities in the execution of plans and programs with respect to the aided international airport.
6.5 Prescribes standards, guidelines, plans and programs for the aided international airport.
6.6 Undertake researches, studies, investigations and other activities related to the operations and developments of the aided international airport.
6.7 Submit comprehensive reports and recommendations to the MIAA for approval with respect to the aided international airport.
6.8 Perform such other duties as MIAA may delegate or assign, and such other acts as may be necessary and proper to implement the mandate of Executive Order No. 341.

Section 7. Responsibilities of International Airports

The other international airport authorities shall continue to exercise their functions, powers and duties provided for under their respective enabling acts, rules and regulations, and in accordance with Executive Order No. 341,

7.1 Formulate and approve policies, plans and programs relating to the management, operation, maintenance and development of their respective international airports to conform to the comprehensive and integrated plans and programs for all international airports as may be formulated by the MIAA.
7.2 Submit periodic reports to the MIAA General Manager in frequency and format as he may determine, covering such areas as the latter may prescribe including but not limited to airport traffic data, status of projects, service level indicators, performance indicators, compliance with policies and directives.

Section 8. Report to the President

The MIAA through its General Manager shall prepare and submit to the President of the Republic of the Philippines, through the Secretary of the DOTC, an integrated and comprehensive annual report generally dealing with its administrative supervision and control over international airports as mandated by Executive Order No. 341.

Section 9. Repealing and Separability Clauses

All rules and regulations or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of these Rules and Regulations, are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

If any provision of these Rules and Regulations is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain valid and existing.

Section 10. Effectivity

These Rules and Regulations shall take effect fifteen (15) days after the completion of its publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation and the filing of three (3) copies hereof with the UP Law Center pursuant to Presidential Memorandum Circular No. 11 dated October 9, 1992.

DONE in the City of Pasay this 2nd day of March in the year of our Lord, Two Thousand and Six.

(Sgd.) LEANDRO R. MENDOZA
Chairman, MIAA Board
Secretary, Department of Transportation & Communications

(Sgd.) ALFONSO G. CUSI
Vice-Chairman, MIAA Board

(Sgd.) JOSEPH H. DURANO
Member, MIAA Board

(Sgd.) ALIPIO F. FERNANDEZ
Member, MIAA Board

(Sgd.) RICARDO R. BELMONTE
Alternate Member, MIAA Board

(Sgd.) NILO C. JATICO
Member, MIAA Board

(Sgd.) MANUEL B. GAITE
Member, MIAA Board

(Sgd.) RAUL B. TRINIDAD
Member, MIAA Board

(Sgd.) JEROME V. PARAS
Member, MIAA Board

(PDI-May 2, 2006)

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
LETTERS

Filipino English

I AGREE WITH RAUL PANGALANAN: Filipinos have too much respect for the English language. ("English is cool, Filipino English is 'kulang,'" PDI, 4/21/06) The point needs repeating, as even in the literary community, English is treated like religion—you can be a heretic by taking liberties with grammar and syntax.

When I first started publishing my stories, one editor in a prestigious magazine made a comment on my syntax. It must have seemed weird to him, but at that time I was reading Kierkegaard in Danish. Some people say his syntax seemed even weirder in translation. Language is a product of human communication and it is dynamic enough to evolve as usage grows.

It's quite normal for Filipinos to develop their own syntax, a syntax that is comfortable to them culturally. But you can't win a Palanca award doing that.

—BRIAN BROTARLO,
brian.brotarlo@lycos.com

Sad and ashamed because of Panganiban

THIS IS A REACTION TO CONRADO de Quiros' column titled "Thank God for Theresa Panganiban." (PDI, 4/25/06) I am 17 years old and I think Panganiban was a cause of shame for the youth like me. She did not deserve praise for interrupting President Macapagal-Arroyo in her speech before the 2006 graduates of the Cavite State University.

I believe that Panganiban graduated without learning basic good manners and right conduct.

It's not wrong to express one's feelings. After all, we are a democracy. But there's a place for everything. Panganiban could have said her piece in some other place but not during a graduation ceremony. As a youth like her, I too was shamed by her insolence and arrogance.

Indeed, a person can go through college but end up still uneducated. People can go to all the schools in the world and collect all the degrees they want, but that is no guarantee that they will learn to act with civility. Our educators should be alarmed and act fast so that they will produce no more Panganibans.

Attitude is very important. The sum of all these is called breeding. This you cannot get from any school. Panganiban lacks breeding. Her school failed to inculcate in her the proper values.

If Panganiban were made a model of the Filipino youth today, I will be very sad and will not be proud to be a Filipino.

—JO SMITH-MEDINA,
josmith_medina2000@yahoo.com

No suspension order against Yaranon?

WE WRITE AS LAWYERS FOR Jadewell Parking Systems Corp. in connection with the news item titled "Baguio mayor not suspended, says Palace exec." (PDI, 4/18/06) The story quoted Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita as having said that there was no suspension order against Mayor Braulio Yaranon of Baguio City because the Department of Interior and Local Government had yet to submit its recommendation to Malacañang, and no decision had yet been reached because of the recent "change in leadership in the DILG."

Ermita must have been fed the wrong information by his staff. The recommendation for the suspension of Yaranon was submitted to him by the DILG as early as Jan. 14, 2005. At the time that the recommendation was sent to Malacañang, the interior secretary was Angelo Reyes.

On record also in the office of Ermita is our letter to him dated Apr. 20, 2005, which was received by his office on Apr. 21, 2005.

We never received a reply from Ermita. On the other hand, if Ermita was referring to the recommendation for the final (not preventive) penalty of suspension of Yaranon, the records of the DILG show that such recommendation was received by his office on Feb. 17, 2006, before Rep. Ronaldo Puno was appointed interior secretary.

—MARCIAL O.T. BALGOS,
Balgos & Perez,
1009 West Tower,
PSE Center, Exchange Road,
Ortigas Center, Pasig City

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No reason to fear unified ID system

NO MATTER WHAT THE GOVERNMENT does in this country, expect the desperate oppositionists and the leftists to insist on their one-way, tunnel-vision biases. But they should respect the decision of the Supreme Court on the national ID law. ("SC rules unified ID system is legal," PDI, 4/20/06)

Such a system has long been in place in many countries. But we Filipinos seem to be in the grip of paranoia, and before the unified ID system can even be tested, doomsday, martial law scenarios are being painted all around, obviously with exaggeration.

As for me, I would be glad to have just one authenticated ID that I can use in all my transactions, if needed. That would mean less paperwork, less bureaucracy and less red tape.

So what have we to fear? There is reason to be afraid only if we don't pay our taxes, if we are rebels or terrorists or criminals; in other words, if we break the law. Otherwise, let the law run its course. As for us, let's go and get a real job.

—VER CHAVEZ,
verncaves@yahoo.com

IF you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@ inquirer.com.ph

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

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Let there be an election

THIS IS A REACTION to Arthur Caballero's letter titled "Who could be a better president than Arroyo?" (PDI, 4/6/06) Caballero said that Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita was right in saying, "Everything that we are in this universe is God's will." And that "instead of relentlessly arguing about Arroyo's continued stay in office, let's pray for our President that she may govern well."

His last statement is troubling. For I can fully agree and believe in God's will but, I cannot agree with people who will just pray and do nothing about such problems as the illegitimacy of the Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo presidency..

If a person goes to a friend's house and he or she sees the friend being raped, must he or she do nothing but pray that the rapist change his mind and stop what he's doing?

It may be God's will that a squatter now occupies Malacañang, but it was also God's will that the "Hello Garci" tapes were exposed. It is also God's will that we, the Filipino people, are blaming Ms Arroyo for every problem we have. Now, about Caballero's question, "So who could be a better president now?" The answer is, let there be an election.

—JOEL ARDOÑA,
jardona@yahoo.com

E-mail: pr_provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph
Text us your feedback: Inquirer atn name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart) Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

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'Jueteng' return to Pangasinan seen

DAGUPAN CITY—AFTER A YEAR OF BEING dormant, the illegal numbers game jueteng is slowly rearing its ugly head again in some towns and cities in the province.

Reports reaching the INQUIRER showed that the jueteng operations were not massive yet as the operators were still "testing the waters" but the police said they were foiling the attempts to revive the game in the bet-rich province.

"We are nipping their guerrilla operations in the bud," a provincial police official said.

Gov. Victor Agbayani said some areas were "backsliding" with regard to the illegal numbers game, "so we have to redouble our efforts to stop it as we want to preserve the gains of the anti-jueteng crusade of Archbishop Oscar Cruz."

"I would like to validate the game's presence in Pangasinan before I take any action. The group in charge of the monitoring system is covering all parishes in central Pangasinan and is listing places where jueteng is reportedly played. It is monitoring down to barangay level and the frequency of draws," he told the INQUIRER by telephone on Monday.

Cruz, the archbishop of the Lingayen-Dagupan diocese, heads the Krusada ng Bayan Laban sa Sugal, an offshoot of the Krusada ng Bayan Laban sa Jueteng.

Cruz reportedly asked regional police officials, through an intermediary, not to let jueteng flourish in Pangasinan.

Agbayani also told reporters that the decision among provincial officials was not to allow the Small Town Lottery (STL) to operate in Pangasinan.

Late last year, the provincial board rebuffed plans to operate the STL and Agbayani said the stand of the local officials had remained.

"But I understand there are many initiatives under way, such as to let town officials operate it on their own, whether the provincial government approves or not," he said.

Agbayani called on the national government to have a consistent policy on gambling as "people are getting confused why the rich can have legal gambling while the poor cannot gamble."

In the past weeks, police arrested bet collectors in some towns but they claimed that the bets were being taken to neighboring provinces where the draws were conducted, a police official said.

"It's frustrating to know that after we got rid of jueteng and were able to concentrate on more serious crimes, we would go back to fighting jueteng again," he said. *Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

4,000 Sulu villagers kept evacuees by war on Sayyaf

JOLO, SULU—MORE THAN 4,000 PEOPLE HAVE failed to return to their homes in four villages in Patikul town, five years after they were displaced by military offensives against the Abu Sayyaf.

In September 2000, Maj. Gen. Romeo Tolentino, chief of the 7th Infantry Division, ordered the offensives against the Abu Sayyaf bandits involved in the kidnapping of 20 mostly foreign tourists from a beach resort in Sipadan, Malaysia.

More than 117,000 people were displaced by the military operations in the towns of Patikul, Indanan, Parang, Panglima Estino, Talipao, Maimbung and Panamao.

No man's land

But Maydelyn Bahjin, social welfare and development provincial director, said a number of villages continued to be isolated or were considered "no man's land" at night.

Bahjin said at least 4,000 people had not returned to their homes in Barangays Kabuntakas, Kandabal, Maligay and Darayan in Patikul.

"Some of them are still residing in Danag, Kantipat and Jolo towns and until now we are still working for the (military) clearance so the residents could already return to their places," she said.

Gov. Benjamin Loong confirmed the report but added that a "balik barangay" program was being implemented to ensure that all the displaced residents could go back to their places of origin.

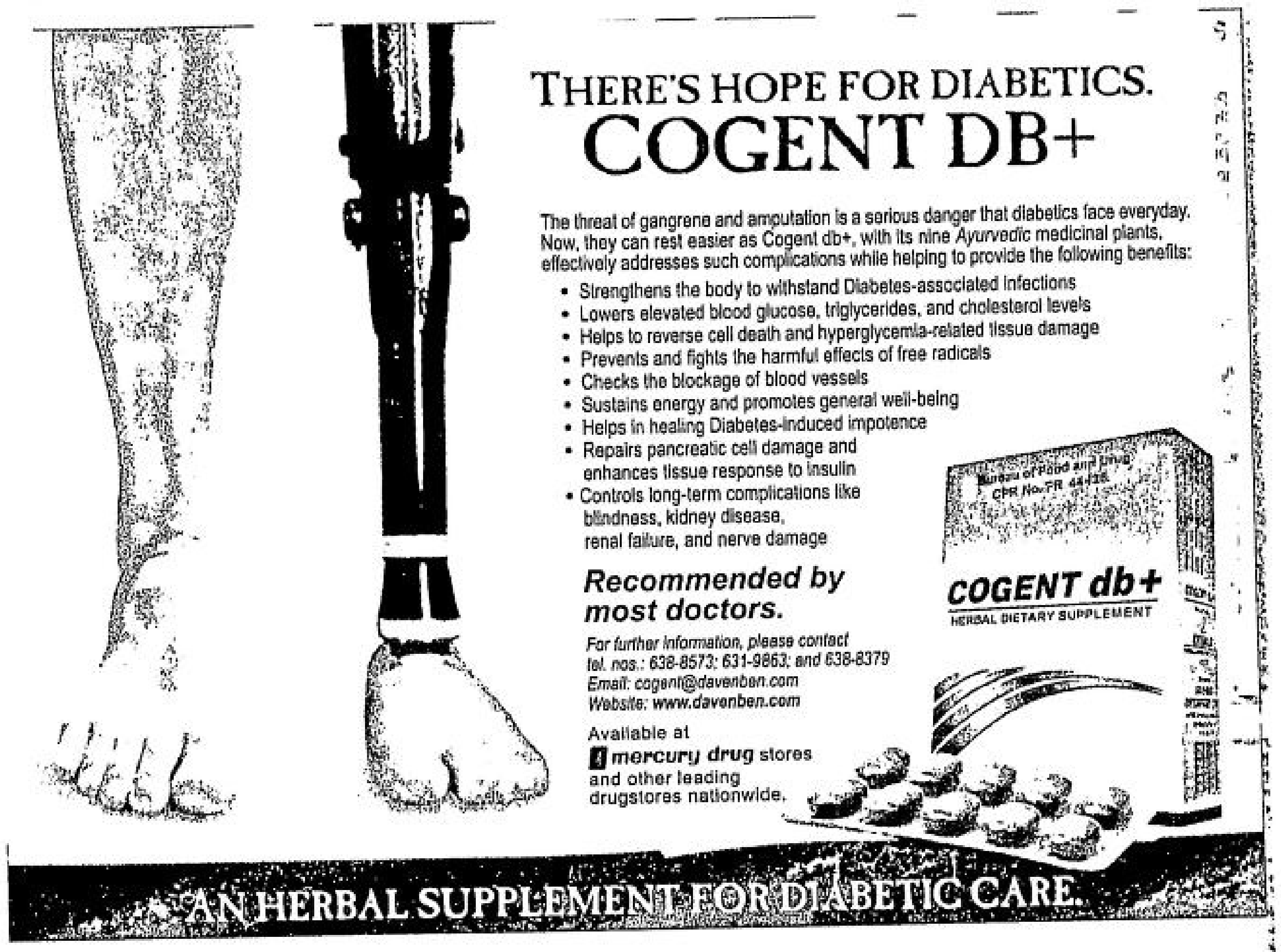
"Some of them have returned, the rest are still afraid but they go to their areas during daytime, harvest their farm products, and go back to where they are presently staying at night," Loong said.

Brig. Gen. Juancho Sabban, chief of the 3rd Marine Brigade, said that except for Kandabal, where they claimed to have "successfully weeded out the Abu Sayyaf," the villages are still restricted from civilians.

"We have troops around conducting operation against the remaining Abu Sayyaf there," Sabban said.

Loong said some residents are allowed to return to their barangays "provided they coordinate with the local authorities and the military."

Jose Manuel Mamauag, Commission on Human Rights regional director, said his office would investigate reports that some villages in Patikul were "considered 'hamletted' by the military." *Julie Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*



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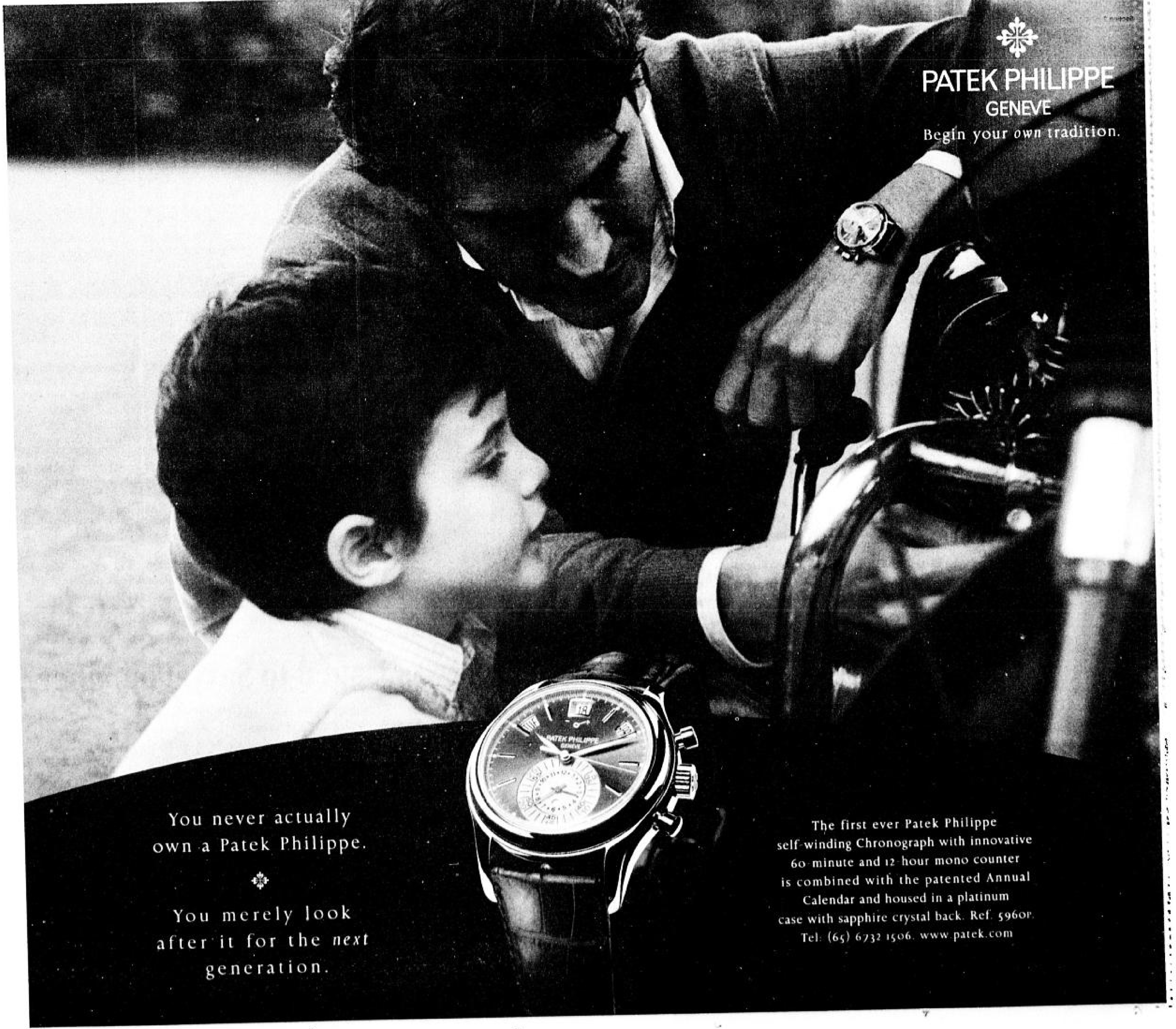

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High bank interest keeps towns deprived of IRA

By Romy G. Amarado
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—ONLY one municipality in Negros Oriental has so far collected its share of the P17.5 billion in withheld portion of the Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) because the rest of the local government units in the province are still looking for a government bank that will take a lower interest cut from the returned IRA share.

Mayor Antonio "Tony" Renacia of Sibulan, 6 km north of here, said his municipality obtained recently some P2.5 million from the Land Bank of the Philippines as its share of the amount being returned by the national government to local government units (LGUs).

He said Sibulan was supposed to receive over P3 million, but the Land Bank was keeping 31 percent of the amount as advance interest.

Renacia said that while the national government agreed to return the withheld portion of IRA to the local governments, it is supposed to be given on a staggered basis for seven years.

However, if an LGU opts to monetize its share, it can collect the amount at once, but with a huge interest deduction, said the mayor.

Renacia said his municipality had opted to get the full amount through the Land Bank, with the League of Municipalities in the Philippines (LMP) in Manila facilitating Sibulan's application.

"We cannot wait for seven years. That is why we opted to monetize," Renacia said.

Renacia said the towns of Vallahermoso and Zamboanguita, also in Negros Oriental, were also applying the scheme adopted by Sibulan. He said he did not know if the two towns had already received their respective shares.

Renacia also said the other LGUs, including the provincial government, were negotiating with other government financial institutions for a lower interest deduction from their share.

Gov says Sorsogon victim of mining foes

SORSOGON CITY—Gov. Raul Lee has urged the national government to allow the resumption of mining operations in Rapu-Rapu, Albay as, he said, it would be the only way to prove if "jt is a responsible and safe industry."

Lee dared mining critics to show scientific data that the mining operations would destroy the environment and threaten the interest of the people.

He said he was apprehensive that the creation of the presidential commission to look into the Lafayette polymetallic project in Rapu-Rapu issue had given the Left and antimining groups a say in government and was scaring away foreign investors in the process.

Lee said creating the commission and appointing members biased against mining were ill-advised.

"Nothing new will be unearthed, except maybe recommending further reforms and possibly the filing of criminal charges against those from the old management, both of which we welcome," he added.

Lee said the commission is a new bureaucratic layer that is directly contradicting the government's pitch for investments because of the antimining sentiments of its members.

"Worse, it has made investors believe that the rules for mining have changed mid-stream despite the recent ruling of the Supreme Court upholding the Mining Act of 1995," he said.

Lee said he was worried the commission might even spark another fish scare in Sorsogon, which had already been proven by scientists to be a hoax.

"They will surely be devastated if that happens again. I will not allow that to happen again and will do everything I can, including taking legal action, to protect our people," he said.

Lee said antimining groups should lay-off Sorsogon. *Bobby Labalan, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

DANCERS depict the Gilon-Gilon, a Pangasinense term for fish harvest, during Dagupan City's Bangus Festival.

TOOTS SOBERANO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Pangasinan town bids for world record with 3-km pork, fish grill

By Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

ALCALA, PANGASINAN—THIS AGRICULTURAL town laid a 3-km grill of pork barbecue and *bangus* (milkfish) on Saturday in an attempt to land in the Guinness Book of World Records and raise funds for its social development programs.

The "barbecue party" that stretched along the main roads traversing eight villages was almost ruined by a heavy downpour less than an hour before the scheduled firing of the grills at 5 p.m.

But the rain stopped after 20 minutes, and the residents readied the grills in time for the event.

As a helicopter chronicling the event hovered, Gov. Victor Agbayani, Board Member Dionisio Villar and Mayor Manuel Collado set the grills on fire at 5:45 p.m. The grills were filled with 2,000 sacks of charcoal and lined with gasoline-soaked cloth.

Organizers then asked participants to grill 4,000 kg. of pork over the grills. After these were cooked, 20,000 pieces of Dagupan *bangus* were cooked next.

"I am confident that we will make it [to the Guinness Records], although this feat is merely secondary to our aim to raise funds through the project," Collado said.

Agbayani hoped that Alcala would achieve its goal "to draw more tourists to the town."

Collado said the town was aiming for two records—the "longest grill" through a 150m continuous grill, and the "longest barbecue" through the 3-km grill comprising 1,000 3-m grills.

The longest barbecue record is held by Dagupan City for its 1.007-km barbecue in 2003. It beat its own record last year when it laid out a 2-km grill, but this has yet to be entered into the Guinness Book.

Collado said each grill used in Alcala was presold to residents now based abroad.

Proceeds will be turned over to the Rang-An ti Alcala Foundation Inc. chaired by Eduardo Tolentino, the festival's steering committee chair.

"The funds will be used for social development projects, like health and education," Collado said.

The 3-km grill passed through the villages of San Pedro Ili, Poblacion, San Nicolas, Poblacion East, Poblacion West, San Juan, San Vicente and Laoac.

Collado said he was not at all discouraged by the downpour because "rains at this time of the year do not usually last long." But he was thankful that the rains came before the scheduled lighting ceremony.

He said since the presence of representatives of the Guinness was optional, the committee decided to document the activity and submit it to the Guinness office in England for validation.

Earlier in the day, a grand parade of former beauty queens of Alcala passed through the main roads of the town.

The 25 former Miss Alcala title holders who joined the parade were led by Apolonia Espiritu, 92, the oldest among the group.

Two mother-and-daughter pairs of beauty queens joined the festivity. They were Espiritu, crowned Miss Alcala in 1933, and her daughter, Louella Dauz, 56, who reigned in 1967; and Remedios Fronda, 89, crowned in 1935, and her daughter, Evangeline Espejo, 58, crowned in 1972.

The town started holding the pageant in 1929.

Safe conduct pass issued to Sayyaf member?

ZAMBOANGA CITY—A TV REporter here said she feared her life could be in danger when she got hold of a confidential military document issued to an arrested Abu Sayyaf suspect.

Ronan Lomongo, a reporter of IBC-ABC 11 news, said an unidentified source gave her a copy of a safe-conduct pass supposedly issued by the Military Intelligence Group (MIG) to Sparle Amiruddin, alias Abu Omar.

Amiruddin, also known as Abu Samurai and Abu Taliban, was one of the planners of the May 2002 Dos Palmas kidnapping of at least 21 people.

He was also allegedly involved in bomb attacks here.

Amiruddin, an alleged conduit of the Jemaah Islamiyah in Mindanao, was arrested here on April 24.

Among the documents seized from the suspect was a safe conduct pass signed by Maj. Romulo Quemado, commander of the MIG in Western Mindanao, Lomongo said.

The MIG is a unit of the Intelligence Services of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

The document, which grants an individual safe passage through military and police checkpoints, was supposedly issued on March 7 and expired on April 7.

Lomongo said the one who gave him the document suspected that the Abu Sayyaf operation in the city had the blessing of some military officials.

"I am really afraid, the person who gave me the document wanted to publicize the wrongdoings of some military officers," Lomongo told the INQUIRER.

But Quemado said he did not consider the supposed safe-conduct pass an issue.

"If indeed he has a copy, it may be fake and does not hold water," Quemado said.

Senior Supt. Francisco Cristobal, city police director, said arrested suspects could always claim anything, "including the alleged issuance of a safe-conduct pass."

"If in case there is one, the Isafp is directly responsible in the investigation since the MIG-9 is one of its units," he said.

Cristobal said a safe-conduct pass could only be issued to members of recognized rebel organizations, "whenever there's peace negotiation or dialogue."

"But as far as we are concerned, we don't have any idea of a military unit releasing a pass, especially to a suspected Abu Sayyaf member," Cristobal said. *Julie Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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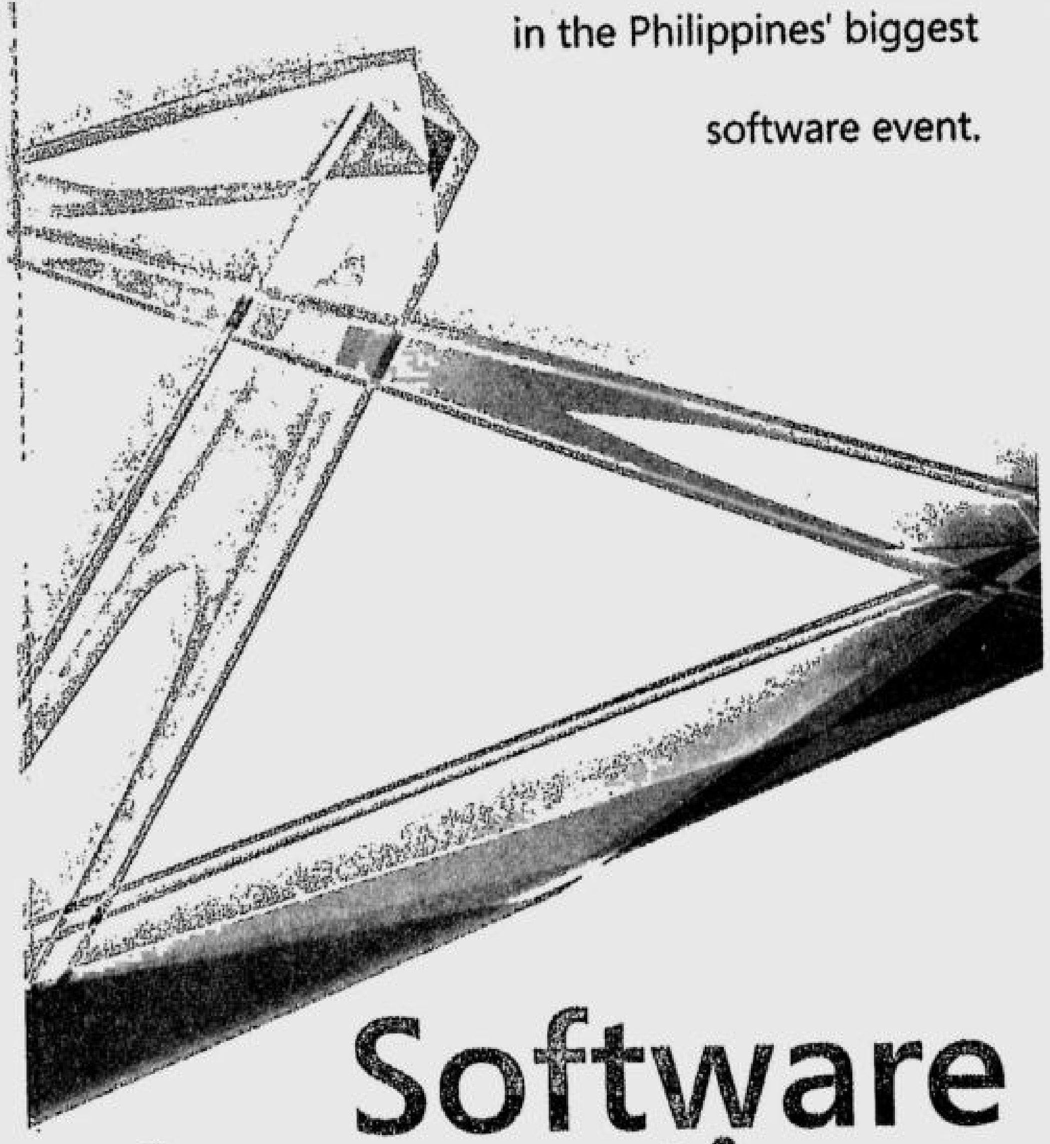

20 PLDT unionists give cops the slip

From page A1

company walked through the main gate of the Malacañang compound, giving police the slip despite Mendiola being a "no-rally zone."

Mistaken for parishioners of a nearby church, members of the Manggagawa ng Komunikasyon ng Pilipinas (MKP) managed to breach the Palace's "impenetrable" security yesterday morning before they were stopped by Manila Police District (MPD) antiriot personnel.

"We did not have any intention to disguise ourselves as churchgoers," Pete Pinlac, MKP president, told the INQUIRER in an interview.

The MKP members, wearing their bright yellow Philippine Long Distance and Telephone (PLDT) uniforms, met at the St. Jude Thaddeus Church near Malacañang at 8:30 a.m.

Pinlac said their yellow shirts, in fact, betrayed their affiliation.

"But for some reason, the police failed to sense our purpose in going to the area," Pinlac said.

The labor leader said they wanted to urge President Macapagal-Arroyo to act on their petition to reinstate more than 300 PLDT workers who were fired "because of redundancy."

The PLDT union members managed to get past the main entrance of the Malacañang compound before riot policemen herded them toward Don Chino Roces Bridge (Mendiola) where they held a short program before peacefully dispersing.

"But we are happy because we were able to breach what was supposed to have been an impenetrable fortress," Pinlac said.

Minor irritant

The Presidential Security Group downplayed the incident as a minor irritant.

Brig. Gen. Delfin Bangit, PSG chief, denied his men had been hoodwinked by the workers.

"I don't agree that the ralliers pulled a fast one on my men. I did not even berate my men because I felt the incident was trivial. They (PLDT workers) were only seeking an audience with the President and when we said no, they dispersed and we let them go," said Bangit in a phone interview.

He, however, admitted that the PLDT union members fooled the PSG when they entered the compound in civilian clothes.

The PLDT workers put on their yellow uniforms when they converged inside the parish church beside the Palace. At 8:50 a.m., they started to walk toward the main gate of the Palace.

Insp. Reynaldo Licup felt there was no need to press charges against the intruders because "they were peaceful and they left promptly."

EMPLOYEES of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. are stopped by police officers in Malacañang after they were able to breach the "no-rally zone."

REM ZAMORA

Bangit said the ralliers would have been arrested had they cried out for the President's ouster in their march on the Palace.

He said the ralliers were able to penetrate the security cordon because they looked innocuous in the yellow shirts worn by all PLDT linemen and the bags they carried only contained documents.

"Our security is trained to look for bombs and other seditious materials and they did not have these things," Bangit said.

No entry zone

Some 5,000 riot policemen backed by a 2,000-strong military force were on standby throughout yesterday to avert any violence, amid intelligence reports that Ms Arroyo's political foes were planning to overthrow her administration.

Malacañang looked like a compound under siege as the police and military barricaded Mendiola and nearby streets.

In a show of force last seen in the 2001 Palace siege, around 700 riot policemen with shields and truncheons occupied historic Mendiola Bridge, site of the most violent antigovernment demonstrations in the past two decades.

PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao reiterated that Mendiola was a "no-rally zone" and that the police were prepared to repel any and all protesters.

"We will not allow any entry into Mendiola. In accordance with the law, we have to stop them," Lomibao told reporters during an inspection of the troops.

Full battle gear

Around 1,000 riot policemen from the Manila Police District, National Capital Region Police Office and PNP Central Luzon Police Office were posted at Mendiola. Another 1,000 were on standby.

Some 200 personnel from the Armed Forces were also on hand as augmentation troops.

Milling around the area were 20 soldiers from the PSG in urban camouflage and full battle gear, including high-powered firearms.

A phalanx of 300 policemen stood guard at the foot of Mendiola Bridge at the junction of Legarda Street and Claro M. Recto Avenue. Another group was assigned near San Beda College, while Air Force antiriot personnel stood near the College of the Holy Spirit.

The last line of defense was formed by the PSG.

Inside the Mendiola gates of the Palace, the INQUIRER espied around 20 empty container vans ready to block the roads. Outside, two fire trucks and an ambulance were parked.

Pedestrians were sparse, a veritable calm before a possible storm.

Paranoid gov't

Followers of deposed President Joseph Estrada marched from his power center in suburban San Juan toward Malacañang but were blocked by police before they could reach their final destination.

"This administration is paranoid. It does not have the support of the people," said San Juan Mayor Jose Victor Ejercito, one of Estrada's sons who helped organize the march.

The militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) rallied several thousand supporters for a march leading to the Palace, defying police orders to stay away.

"The nation is united in defiance. We have no choice but to fight back," Bayan secretary general Renato Reyes said, calling on Ms Arroyo to step down.

"She only has herself to blame for the rising tide of protests against her regime," he said, blaming her for the country's economic woes and for the unsolved killings of dozens of leftist activists since she took office in 2001.

The protests "will all the more fortify the people's movement to oust Arroyo," added Elmer Labor, chair of Kilusang Mayo Uno. *With reports from AFP and AP*

Cops, Army troops arrest 20 militants

From page A1

Pondulanan and Clarita Horca Cinteno, also on Friday, while recruiting participants for a Labor Day rally in Ormoc City.

The women were suspected to be NPA members. A .22-cal. revolver was reportedly taken from one of them.

Tagaytay arrests

PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao announced the arrest of the four men in Tagaytay at a news conference hours before planned May Day protests in the capital.

It was unclear if the arrests had prompted the heightened security measures in Metro Manila, but officials at the news briefing said they reinforced the police belief that the NPA had been infiltrating demonstrations.

Reported seized from the group were a map, mobile phones, two laptop computers, flash and floppy discs, and assorted receipts showing the purchase of ammonium nitrate and 8,000 small metal balls—basic components in the manufacture of improvised bombs.

The mobile phones purportedly showed text messages between the suspected NPA members and unidentified members of the Magdalo group of rebel soldiers involved in the botched 2003 Oakwood mutiny. No details were released.

"They were organizing plans (to) come here to Metro Manila," said Chief Supt. Prospero Noble, director of the Southern Luzon police. "We were able to preempt them."

Rally strategy

Lomibao said one of the seized documents listed the protesters' itinerary, as well as what they should do when barred from proceeding to their rally site by police.

"If stopped, hold the ground. All should get down and cause a traffic jam, and start a program. While someone is negotiating, look for a way to get through," Lomibao quoted from the document.

The KMP said the four arrested were among five members reported missing earlier. KMP spokesperson Carl Ala said they were not NPA members.

Attempt to link Magdalo

Ala also decried what he called yet another attempt by government to link his group to the NPA and the Magdalo.

"They would now say this is part of destabilization and that the documents (the police seized) proves this," Ala said.

A police report said Galang had admitted to being a guerrilla in a unit that killed an Army corporal in Lian, Batangas, on Dec. 23, 2005.

The police intelligence unit in Southern Luzon also claimed Galang had previously met with 1st Lt. Lawrence San Juan, a Magdalo soldier who escaped from detention but who was later recaptured by authorities, also in Southern Luzon.

Ocampo said the arrests were a "preemptive action to weaken" the protest movement and lend credence to the reported "Oplan Manggagawa"—a destabilization project that allegedly included a plan to unseat Ms Arroyo.

48 labor leaders killed

Also yesterday, the human rights group Karapatan said 48 labor leaders had been killed allegedly by military and police agents since President Macapagal-Arroyo came to power in 2001.

The 48, who had worked for wage increases, were among 562 leaders and members of anti-Arroyo groups slain during the period. *With reports from Norman Bordadora and Jani Arnaiz, PDI Visayas Bureau*

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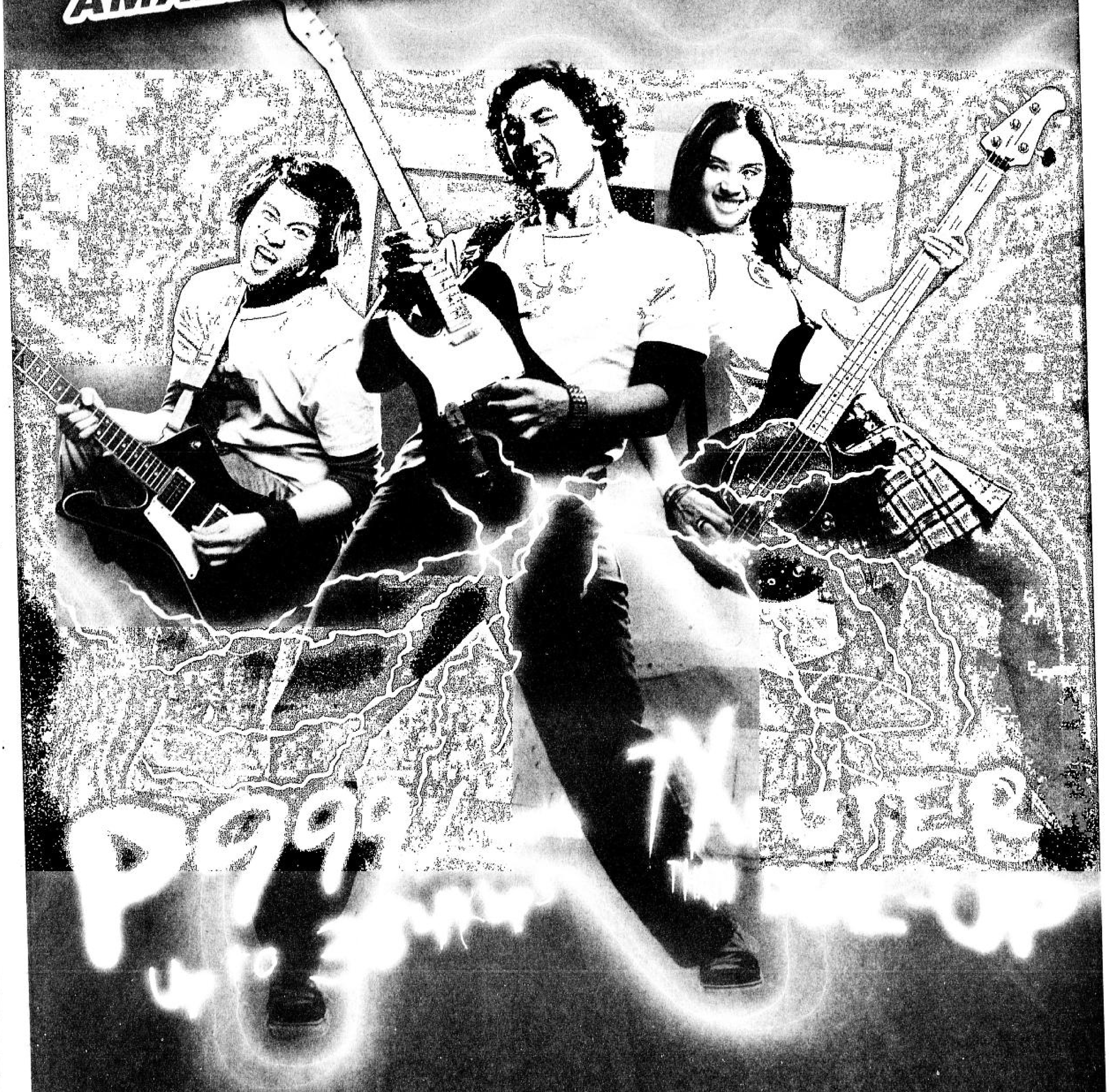

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Work on Alabang viaduct improvements begins

Traffic problems expected to be reduced

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT G. RODRIGUEZ

By Daxim L. Lucas

ADVANCE WORK ON THE SOUTH LUZON EXpressway (SLEx) rehabilitation project has begun with the construction of an additional exit at the foot of the Alabang viaduct.

The new exit will soon rise on the southbound lane going to Filinvest Corporate City and Alabang.

Work has also started under the viaduct with the paving of the median strips and islands.

According to the South Luzon Tollway Corp. (STLC), the rehabilitation project's main contractor, the advance work should help relieve traffic along the expressway once the major repair work gets underway.

The P8-billion project to repair, widen and extend the main artery from Manila to Southern Luzon was launched last March, starting with the clearing operations at the Marcos-era Alabang viaduct.

In a statement, SLTC president Mark Dumol said the first phase of the project—the repair and widening of the viaduct—will take at least two years to finish.

The SLTC is a joint venture between the Philippine National Construction Corp. (PNCC) and Malaysian toll operator MTD Capital Bhd.

Dumol said the project proponent's experience in building and operating toll ways in many countries will ensure that traffic problems during the construction work on the road and bridge ways will be minimized.

The SLTC's foreign partner is the second largest toll operator in Malaysia and a major proponent of property and infrastructure developments in Malaysia and overseas.

In the statement, MTD Capital Group managing director Dato Azmil Khalid said the company is aware of the heavy daily traffic on the 30-kilometer SLEx.

"The SLEx is one of the earliest toll roads in the country and over 160,000 vehicles use it daily," Dato Azmil said.

As the main contractor, SLTC will observe a strict timetable and try to finish the project on schedule to minimize traffic disturbance, he vowed.

The major repair work itself will start only after the public has been informed of the detailed traffic management program to be implemented during the rehabilitation, the company said.

This same procedure was followed in previous MTD projects, including the Tada-Nellore Toll Highway in Andra–Pradesh, India under the National Highway of India and the 262-kilometer Kuala Lumpur-Karak Highway and its extension East-Coast Expressway and East-West Highway in Malaysia.

The new road will link SLEx to the Southern Tagalog Arterial Road (STAR). Further extensions will connect these toll ways to the new Batangas international port.

WHAT'S INSIDE

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No room for 'eyesores' in Pasay

By Jocelyn R. Uy

PASAY CITY WILL SOON BE RID of "eyesores" on the streets.

The City Council has just passed on third and final reading an ordinance regulating the display of billboards or other advertising materials in major thoroughfares, secondary streets, even parking areas and waiting sheds.

Saying that the numerous billboards posted were a public nuisance that pose a danger to lives and property, the council said there was an "urgent need" for an ordinance to regulate the posting of advertising materials in the city.

Under the ordinance, the following billboards are banned: those with dazzling and neon designs; those that feature prohibited drugs, sanitary products or birth control devices; contain political messages, nudity or are offensive to the public.

Billboards that will be put up along the city's major arteries like Edsa, Roxas Boulevard, Taft Avenue, Gil Puyat Avenue (formerly Buendia), FB Harrison, Arnaiz Street (Libertad), Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard, Andrew's Avenue and other airport roads, shall be submitted beforehand to City Hall for evaluation and approval.

Life has no limits for man without limbs

Nick Vujicic's tales inspire a worldwide audience

By Tina G. Santos

HE MAY HAVE BEEN BORN without limbs but Nick Vujicic said he is living a life without limits.

The 23-year-old motivational speaker was in the Philippines recently to share his story as part of his ministry "to give hope to people any way I can."

Vujicic was born on Dec. 4, 1982 in Melbourne, Australia, without arms or legs. The eldest in a brood of three, doctors were unable to explain why he was born with a "birth defect," since his siblings were normal.

He recalled that his parents were "absolutely devastated" when he was born. "The Bible says 'Consider it pure joy whenever you face trials of many kinds' (James 1:2). As my parents were Christians, my dad even a pastor, they knew that verse very well. But there were no warnings or time to prepare themselves for it when I came," Vujicic said.

Growing up, Vujicic never ran out of questions the moment he realized he was different from other children his age.

"I questioned God's existence," he told the INQUIRER. "I thought, if He loves me that much, then why did He let me feel so much pain?" It took a while for his parents to be at peace and trust that God was in control, Vujicic added.

The law in Australia didn't allow people with physical disability to be integrated into a mainstream school, he explained.

"Some people assumed that I was also mentally disabled. But God gave my mom the strength to fight the law to be changed. I was one of the first disabled students to be integrated into a mainstream school," Vujicic said. With the help of his parents, who were always there to give him strength, his attitude towards life and God gradually changed.

At age 21, he received a Bachelor of Commerce degree major in financial planning and accounting. "I can do everything from brushing my teeth, combing my hair, dressing up, shaving, taking care of my personal needs," said Vujicic, who also loves to swim, fish and play soccer.

He has since gone around the world to share his story with other people. "Encouraging and inspiring others to live to their fullest potential, and not let anything get in the way of accomplishing their hopes and dreams became my passion," he stressed.

With God behind him, Vujicic says there are no limits to what he can do.

AUSTRALIAN Nick Vujicic, who was born without arms or legs, interacts with students in Manila. Vujicic was in the country recently to share his message of hope. RODEL ROTONI

METROBRIEFS

Seven fighting men

SEVEN men were arrested yesterday for beating up a traffic enforcer and later venting their ire on two photographers and a driver inside a Quezon City police station. The suspects caused a commotion at the Kamuning Police Station when three of them attacked photographers Arturo Son and Jose Labanero, and Son's driver, Norman Tolentino. The seven were arrested earlier after they beat up Ricardo Angeles, a traffic officer. Some of the suspects, who appeared drunk, were even heard boasting that one of them was the son of a commodore. The seven were identified as Robbie Chua, Jason Andoloy, Benedict Chan, Carl Stephen Lim, Stephen Chang, Charles Lei and Harry Licup. *DJ Yap*

SC clears Lim

THE SUPREME Court has ordered the Manila City government to pay the Fajardo estate P36 million for the over two hectares of land in Tondo distributed to informal settlers during the term of Mayor Mel Lopez. Alfredo Lim , who succeeded Lopez in 1992, had ordered the city administrator to stop the payments since he found the deal "questionable." The High Court also upheld a Court of Appeals decision clearing Lim (now senator) and former city administrator Ramon Marzan of civil liability for stopping the payments. *Armand N. Nocum*

HELPING HAND Members of KAISA, a support group of Manila Vice Mayor Danny Lacuna, help out Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Flood Control workers during an estero clean-up campaign on Arlegui St., Manila

BF Homes road digging project subject of brickbats

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE PRESIDENT OF THE HOMEOWNERS association in BF Homes Parañaque is on the warpath again, this time, because of the street diggings being carried out by the city government inside the subdivision.

Nelson Lacambra, spokesperson of Mayor Florencio Bernabe, said the mayor recently received an angry letter from United BF Homeowners Association Inc. president Celso Reyes saying that the project was "in furtherance of your (city government's) continued control of the roads and open spaces in BF Homes which are private."

Lacambra added that Reyes told the mayor the road repairs were in violation of the writ of preliminary injunction issued by the Court of Appeals last month. The injunction returned to the UBFHAI control over the eight gates leading to the subdivision.

"The problem of Reyes is he keeps seeing shadows where there are none by imputing ill-motives, even to well-intentioned government projects for the benefit, in this case, of BF Homes residents, including himself, even if he is not a legitimate resident of BF Homes-Parañaque," Bernabe said in a statement.

The mayor explained that the road diggings on Aguirre and Elizalde Avenues were part of the city government's lighting project which included all major roads of private subdivisions and dimly-lit national roads within the city limits.

Bernabe also added that if Reyes would be able to show any document, like a Deed of Donation, proving that the main roads of BF Homes had been turned over by its developer to UBFHAI, he would stop the project.

"If he has nothing to show, he has no business telling the city government what project it can or cannot do in BF Homes Parañaque," the mayor said.

2006 The CATHOLIC MASS MEDIA AWARDS is on!!!

Who can nominate? Entries may be submitted by any person or organization wishing to direct the attention of the CMMA to a meritorious program, series, article, material & the like. A person or a company may submit more than one entry in each category. Entries need not be Christian and nominees need not be Catholics.

CATEGORIES

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Best Outdoor Ad - Public Service
Best Print Ad - Branded
Best Print Ad - Public Service
Best Radio Ad - Branded
Best Radio Ad - Public Service
Best TV Ad - Branded
Best TV Ad - Public Service

TELEVISION
Best Adult Educational/Cultural Program
Best Business News or Feature
Best Children's Program
Best Comedy Program
Best Drama Series/Program
Best Entertainment Program
Best News Magazine
Best News Program
Best Public Service Program
Best Special Event Coverage
Best Sports Show
Best Talk Show

PRINT
Best Business Column
Best Children's Magazine
Best Comic Strip
Best Editorial Cartoon
Best Entertainment Column
Best Investigative Report
Best Local Community/ Parish Newspaper
Best News Coverage
Best News Photograph
Best Opinion Column
Best Sports Column
Best Youth Magazine

MUSIC
Best Album - Secular
Best Album - Religious
Best Music Video

INTERNET
Best Website

CINEMA
Best Picture

RADIO (AM or FM)
Best Business News or Feature
Best Counseling & Public Service Program
Best Drama Program (Episodic or Serial)
Best Educational Program
Best Entertainment Program
Best News Commentary
Best News Program
Best Sports Program

STUDENT
Best Student Organ (Grade School, High School, College)
Best TV Production (documentary or narrative)
Best Short Film (documentary or narrative)
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SERVIAM AWARD
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CRITERIA FOR JUDGING
Love for God
Love for truth
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Promotion of positive Filipino values
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Awards Night - October 21, 2006

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Let's not prejudge those US Marines

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

YESTERDAY, LABOR DAY, REMINDED US OF the importance of labor in the economic life of a nation.

Labor and capital, composed of people or institutions that hire the services of workers, must complement each other in the economic development of a nation.

One cannot live without the other. Labor and capital are like the yin and yang, male and female principle.

That's why when labor asks for a wage increase or additional benefits, it should consider the capability of capital or employers to afford the burden.

Many foreign investors that have set up offices and factories in the country have closed down and transferred elsewhere in Asia because of our highly militant labor force.

The fear of being hit by strikes and demands for higher wages every year has resulted in us losing out to our neighbors in attracting foreign capital.

Labor should not kill the goose the lays the golden eggs.

* * *

Let's not be too emotional in handling and reporting the Subic rape case.

News reports and commentaries about the case seem to prejudge the accused American Marines. We should take into account that the accused still have to be tried in court.

For all we know, there was no rape, only consensual sex.

If we look at the other side of the picture, how could there have been rape when the supposed victim was wearing tight-fitting jeans at the time?

How could the jeans have been removed in a very tight spot such as the van where the rape was supposed to have been committed?

Try taking off tight-fitting jeans you're wearing inside your car and you'll know what I mean.

The pair of jeans that the victim wore at the time could only have been removed by force if there was rape. But there were no signs of force like bruises on the victim's body. Meaning, she removed the jeans herself or was assisted in taking it off.

Here's another fact worth taking note of: The victim was "dumped like a pig" on a sidewalk near the pier where the ship of the accused was docked. She had her pants off her but she was wearing her panties. A condom was found glued onto her pants, apparently still sticky.

So, the accused still took the time to put on a condom while he was forcing himself on the supposed victim? From where I stand, the man in a consensual sex encounter wears a condom not only for his own protection but for his partner as well.

Before the supposed rape, the alleged victim and an American later identified as Cpl. Keith Silkwood were engaged in "dirty dancing" at the Neptune Club inside the former Subic naval base. Both the alleged victim and Silwood appeared drunk.

From what I gathered, Staff Sgt. Chad Carpentier, the team leader of three Marines—Corporals Daniel Smith and Dominic Duplantis and Silkwood—came to fetch them at the Neptune.

The group's curfew was about up and the Marines had to hurry back to their ship. If they violated the curfew, they would not be granted a liberty pass to leave their ship when it docked in Okinawa, its next port of call.

The woman went with the Marines to the van that fetched them. She was not forced into the van, as reports indicated.

The alleged victim's sister, who had another US serviceman for a boyfriend, tried to prevent her from going with the group; but she was adamant.

How could those Marines think of gang-raping the woman when they were so worried about getting back to their ship to beat the curfew?

At this point, let's not prejudge the Marines in the manner of "us" Filipinos against "them" Americans lest we be accused of being xenophobic (haters of foreigners).

Darfur rebels say peace pact 'not acceptable'

ABUJA—TALKS WERE UNDER way Sunday to try to salvage an African Union-brokered peace agreement after rebels from Sudan's war-torn Darfur region refused to sign it, hours before the deadline to complete negotiations to end the conflict.

Two anti-Khartoum rebel movements, the Sudanese Liberation Movement (SLM) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), had earlier issued statements that they had taken a "joint position" not to sign the AU-brokered peace accord.

"This document is not acceptable to us, and we are not going to go by it or sign it," JEM spokesperson Ahmed Hussain said.

Hopes for the peace agreement appeared to have been dashed Sunday afternoon as a meeting took place between the rebel groups and AU mediators, after the AU responded that the content of the deal would not change.

The rebels were expected officially to refuse of the deal at the meeting. The deadline set by the AU for completing peace negotiations was due to expire at midnight Sunday.

But a new session of talks began later in the day.

The Darfur conflict has killed 300,000 people and displaced 2.4 million in three years of fighting.

A special representative of the UN secretary general for Sudan, Jan Pronk, and international mediators also attended Sunday afternoon's meeting, which started at 4:45 p.m. (1545 GMT).

After just over an hour participants agreed to meet for a full session later in the day, one of them told AFP. But AU spokesperson Noureddine Mezni said, "For us in the mediation team, our assignment is over at 12 midnight."

REBEL Sudan Liberation Army commanders Mariam Abdallah (left) and Roda Mohamed Ahmed attend negotiations with Sudan government representatives in Abuja, Nigeria, May 1. REUTERS

"As mediators, the AU deadline and document will not change," the AU spokesperson said in reaction to the rebel statements.

"Our position is supported by the UN Security Council and if the agreement is not signed they know what to do," he added.

"A couple of hours' slip is no problem, of course, you can stop the clock and continue," Pronk said.

"But the AU has set the deadline. I think the moment of truth is now. We have reached more or less the end of possibilities. (The rebels) have to sign tomorrow.

"The AU document is workable. Of course it doesn't satisfy all the parties 100 percent. It is not possible to satisfy all. We need to compromise," he said.

"The international community has to make a plea to all the parties to sign, but you have to sign tomorrow.

"I did remind the parties this afternoon on the need to sign the agreement, but you cannot continue day after day repeating the old positions. It is not a serious representation of the people who you claim to fight for," Pronk said.

"I have the hope that the parties will be reasonable to understand that this is important," he said..

"I have to present a report to the UN Security Council. If the government of Sudan is willing to accept the pressure of the international community to sign, and the parties are not ready to do so, then they have to bear the brunt. And these are political consequences which the UN Security Council will decide.

Reservations raised by the rebels included claims that the AU document did not consider giving the vice presidential political post to the Darfur region, or adequately resolve other power-sharing and wealth-distribution issues.

The Sudanese government delegation from Khartoum on Sunday reiterated its readiness to sign the peace accord. "The (Sudanese) government commits itself fully to apply the accord in good faith," it said in a statement. *AFP*

SaveDarfur.org

US actor George Clooney speaks in front of the Capitol Hill in Washington April 30 during the "Million Voices for Darfur" rally. REUTERS

US celebrities, activists urge end to Darfur genocide

WASHINGTON—THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE joined celebrities and lawmakers at a rally urging the Bush administration and Congress to help end genocide in Sudan's Darfur region.

"Not on our watch!" the crowd chanted Sunday as a parade of speakers lined up for their turn on a stage on the National Mall, the Capitol serving as a backdrop.

"The personal motivation for a lot of us is the Holocaust," said Boston-based Rabbi Or Rose of Jewish Seminarians for Justice. "Given our history and experience, we feel an obligation to stand up and speak out."

In an interview, refugee Hassan Cober said he was forced to leave his family and flee Sudan four years ago after many were killed and raped. He urged the United States and the United Nations to act quickly, saying he had no idea where his family was or if they were OK.

"We need deeds, not words," said Cober, now of Portland, Maine. "They need to come to Darfur today, not tomorrow, because what is going on is a disaster."

The organizers' permit anticipated 10,000 to 15,000 people would rally, one of several in US cities this weekend against what the United Nations calls the world's worst humanitarian disaster.

"It is the socially responsible, good conscience thing to do," said Ron Fisher, who took a pre-dawn bus from Cleveland with his 15-year-old daughter Jordyn. "It's an opportunity to show my daughter what people do when they care about something."

The US Park Police, which does not issue crowd estimates, reported no arrests.

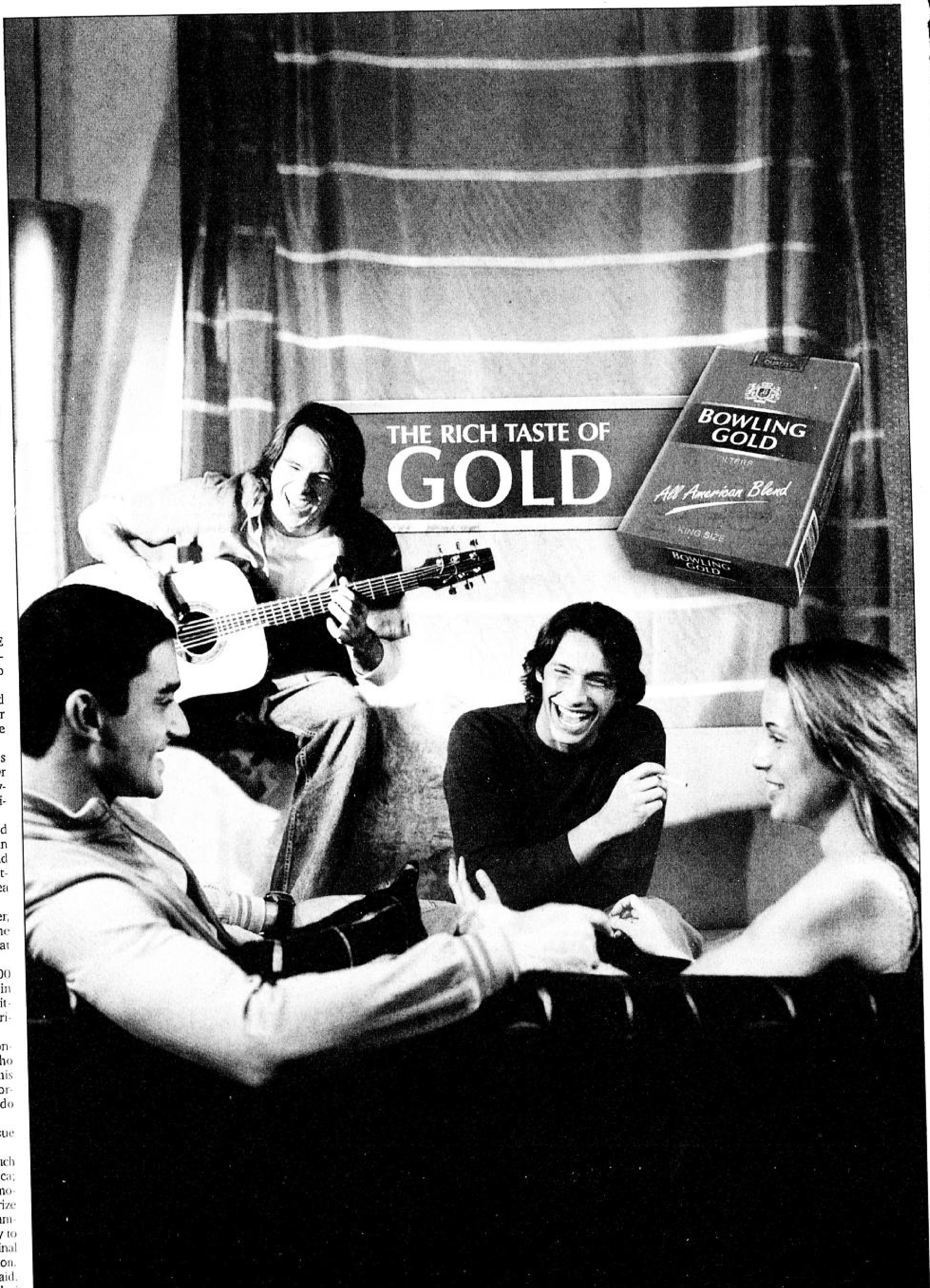
The event attracted high-profile speakers such as actor George Clooney, just back from Africa; Democratic Sen. Barack Obama; House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi; Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel; Olympic speedskating champion Joey Cheek, who gave his bonus money to the cause; and Roman Catholic Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, archbishop of Washington.

"If we care, the world will care," Obama said. "If we act, then the world will follow." Pelosi said Democrats for once agree with President George W. Bush: "This genocide must stop."

Clooney and his father, Nick, a former television anchorman, interviewed families in Sudanese refugee camps. The elder Clooney described their role as reporters. "It's our job to tell you what we saw," he said. "Thousands of people hanging on by the most gossamer of threads."

His son, clad in a black T-shirt and khaki cargo pants, was the event's big draw. He said the United States' and United Nations' policies are failing—and citizens must demand change.

"This is in fact the first genocide of the 21st century, but there is hope: all of you," the actor said. "Every one of you speaking with one voice, every one of you." *AP*



Government Warning: Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

The WORLD

Nepal leaders curb king's powers

KATMANDU—NEPAL'S TOP POLITICIANS MET MONDAY TO thrash out the makeup of an interim administration but a senior leader said the Maoist rebels who had helped them topple the king's government would not be asked to join it.

A seven-party alliance called on the Maoists, fighting a decade-long rebellion, to renounce violence after parliament took the first step to reduce King Gyanendra's sweeping powers.

After a meeting of senior party leaders Monday, the leader of the second largest party, Madhav Kumar Nepal, told AFP an interim Cabinet would not include any rebel leaders.

"Not just now, because they still have to come to talks and the arms issue still has to be finalized," said Nepal, leader of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist).

He said he hoped the new Cabinet would be announced later Monday.

The Maoists, currently observing a three-month unilateral ceasefire, have been fighting an insurgency that has left at least 12,500 dead since 1996.

They struck a loose deal late last year with the seven political parties, their former foes, after Gyanendra seized absolute power in February 2005.

Together the alliance and Maoists brought hundreds of thousands on to the streets across the country during 19 days in April, crippling the country and forcing Gyanendra into a humiliating climbdown.

The king called for the parliament he dissolved in 2002 to be reformed and on Sunday swore in Girija Prasad Koirala, 84, as the new premier.

Lawmakers on Sunday unanimously supported plans to elect a new body to rewrite the 1990 constitution which gives the monarch sweeping powers to sack the government and head the 90,000-strong military.

No date was set for the elections to a constituent assembly.

Leaders of the alliance were meeting at the home of the new premier early Monday but Koirala was too ill to attend himself, his personal assistant Balkrishna Dahal said.

Two of the small parties in the coalition would not be represented in the Cabinet, the leader of one of the groups said. *AFP*

NEW Nepal Prime Minister Prasad Koirala. AFP

Powell advised Bush to add troops to Iraq

FORMER US Secretary of State Colin Powell (left) and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice tangle over Iraq policy. REUTERS

WASHINGTON—US SECRETARY of State Condoleezza Rice on Sunday defended the Bush administration's Iraq war planning after her predecessor, Colin Powell, said he had made a case to send more troops to deal with the war's aftermath.

Rice also said she did not "remember specifically" what instance Powell was referring to on his recommending to President George W. Bush that more troops be sent.

In an interview with a private British television station on Sunday, Powell said there had been debates about the size of the force and how to deal with the aftermath.

"I don't think we had enough force there to impose order," he said on ITV's Jonathan Dimbleby program.

"The aftermath turned out to be much more difficult than anyone had anticipated," said Powell, adding he had favored a larger military presence to deal with the unforeseen.

"I made the case to General (Tommy) Franks, to (Defense) Secretary (Donald) Rumsfeld and to the president that I was not sure we had enough troops," Powell said. But he said the military leaders felt they had the appropriate number.

Powell's comments come amid concern about the rising death toll in Iraq, which has been a factor in driving Bush's approval ratings to the lowest of his presidency.

Since the US-led invasion in March 2003, the US military death toll in Iraq has grown to nearly 2,400. Iraqi military deaths are estimated at up to 6,370 and Iraqi civilian deaths at up to 38,600.

Rice, appearing on several Sunday talk shows, was responding to Powell's comments that fanned the controversy over the administration's plans for the invasion's immediate aftermath. Critics say violence and looting set the stage for a bloody insurgency and sectarian killings over the last three years.

Asked on CNN's Late Edition if she remembered Powell's dissent, Rice said, "I don't remember specifically what Secretary Powell may be referring to, but I'm quite certain that there were lots of discussions about how best to fulfill the mission when we went into Iraq."

She said Bush relied on his military advisers, and that he "asked time and time again" whether everything needed to execute the plan was available, "and he was told 'yes'." *Reuters*

Preemptive treatment for psychosis falls short

IN RECENT YEARS, PSYCHIATRIC researchers have been experimenting with a bold and controversial treatment strategy: They are prescribing drugs to young people at risk for schizophrenia who have not yet developed the full-blown disorder.

The hope is that while exposing some to drugs unnecessarily, preemptive treatment may help others ward off or even prevent psychosis, sparing them the agonizing flights of paranoia and confusion that torment the 3 million American who suffer from schizophrenia.

Yet the findings from the first long-term trial of early drug treatment, appearing Monday in The American Journal of Psychiatry, suggest that this preventive approach is more difficult to put into effect—and more treacherous—than scientists had hoped.

Daily doses of the anti-psychotic drug Zyprexa, from Eli Lilly, blunted symptoms in many patients and lowered their risk of experiencing a psychotic episode in the first year of treatment, the study found. But the drug also caused significant weight gain, and so many participants dropped out of the study that investigators could not draw firm conclusions about drug benefits.

The study, which was financed by Eli Lilly and the National Institute of Mental Health, raised more questions than it answered, experts said.

"The positive result was only marginally significant, and the negative result was clear," said Dr. Thomas McGlashan, a professor of psychiatry at Yale and the study's lead author. "This might discourage people, and legitimately so, from using this drug for prevention because of the weight gain, but hopefully it won't discourage study" of other drugs.

Critics have charged that treating people for a disorder that has not yet been diagnosed is not only premature but stigmatizing, especially for adolescents. The study was intended in part to clarify the trade-off between the risks and the potential benefits of preemptive treatment.

Researchers enrolled 60 people, most of them adolescents, who scored highly on a scale that assesses risk for psychosis. The researchers split the participants into two groups, one that received drug treatment and one that took placebo pills. In the first year of two-year trial, five of the 31 of those on medication developed full-blown psychosis, compared with 11 of 29 of those who were taking dummy pills. *NYT*

EUROPE'S HIGH AND MIGHTY

Royalties and guests pose at the Royal Palace of Stockholm April 30 during the celebration of the 60th birthday of King Carl Gustaf of Sweden. Front row (from left): Dorrit Moussaieff of Iceland, Arch Dutchess Maria Teresa of Luxembourg, Queen Sonja of Norway, Queen Silvia of Sweden, Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands, President Tarja Halonen of Finland and Queen Paolo of Belgium. Back row (from left) President Olafur Grimsson of Iceland, Arch Duke Henri of Luxembourg, King Harald of Norway, King Carl Gustaf of Sweden, Prince Consort Henrik of Denmark, Pentti Arajarvi of Finland, Prince Hans-Adam of Liechtenstein and King Albert of Belgium. REUTERS

Australia won't add to skilled migrants

CANBERRA—AUSTRALIA WILL keep its skilled immigration intake steady for the 2006/07 financial year, the government announced on Monday, disappointing business groups who wanted more immigrants to meet widening skills shortages.

Immigration Minister Amanda Vanstone said Australia would accept between 134,000 and 144,000 new skilled and family migrants in 2006/07, up by about 1,000 on 2005/06, but with the skilled program to remain steady at 97,500.

The new intake comes as Australia scours the world for skilled workers to fill job vacancies, and follows marketing campaigns in 2005 to attract nurses, plumbers and welders from India, Britain, the Netherlands and Germany.

The Business Council of Australia (BCA) said it wanted the government to lift the immigration intake to about 180,000 a year to help counter the impact of an aging population and labor shortages at a time of record low unemployment in Australia. *Reuters*

City marks 50th year of Minamata disease

TOKYO—THE JAPANESE CITY that gave its name to Minamata disease was set to hold a ceremony Monday to mark 50 years since the neurological disorder caused by mercury poisoning was first diagnosed, a municipal official said.

City officials will lay flowers at a monument for those who have died of the disease since it was officially recognized on May 1, 1956, in Minamata on Japan's main island of Kyushu, said Mitsuru Ichigosaki who is overseeing the event.

About 1,000 people are expected to attend, he said.

The disease—which causes spasms, blurred vision and can lead to birth defects in the children of infected parents—was later linked to the consumption of fish from Minamata Bay, where Japanese chemical company Chisso Corp. had been dumping tons of mercury.

More than 2,000 people are officially recognized by the government as victims of the disease and are entitled to free health care.

Some 12,000 other people claim to be Minamata victims but have symptoms that do not fall precisely within the parameters of the disease as set out by law. They have received one-off compensation payments from the government, the disbursement of which began in 1995, but are not entitled to free health care.

In October 2004, the Supreme Court held Japan's government responsible for allowing the pollution to continue for years after the discovery of the disease, and ordered it to pay additional compensation to 37 people who were among the 12,000 unrecognized victims.

Chisso paid some 240 million yen in damages to those 37 plaintiffs in 2001.

Lawmakers last week urged the government to provide all of the unrecognized Minamata victims with medical assistance and more compensation.

Although the government has said it plans to expand its support program, it said Friday it had no plans to widen the disease's definition to those not previously eligible for compensation.

On Saturday, hundreds of Minamata disease sufferers and their supporters marched in central Tokyo to demand government assistance for the unrecognized victims.

Despite the terrifying effects of the poisoning, Chisso continued to dump mercury in the bay until 1970. Victims' advocates say the poisoning was much more widespread than the government admits. *AP*

MINAMATA disease patients and supporters march in Tokyo April 29 urging greater support for victims of the neurological disorder. AP

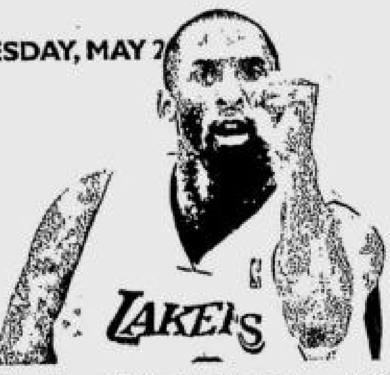
New tech advice site at Yahoo

SAN FRANCISCO—YAHOO INC. unveiled a shopping site for gadgets laced with plain-English advice by experts and user-contributed reviews, entering a market long dominated by tech-focused media firm CNet Networks Inc.

Yahoo! Tech (http://tech.yahoo.com), as the new Yahoo property is known, marks the latest move by the world's biggest Internet media company to reinvigorate or expand into areas such as travel, finance, automobiles, and now technology.

Yahoo! Tech is set to offer hundreds of thousands of products with user product ratings and reviews through its Yahoo Shopping site, as well as question-and-answer guides and community features that exist within the wider Yahoo realm.

The site aims to set itself apart from jargon-filled gadget enthusiast sites by focusing on how to make technology easier to understand, the executive in charge said. *Reuters*



■ Kobe lifts Lakers /A23

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SPORTS

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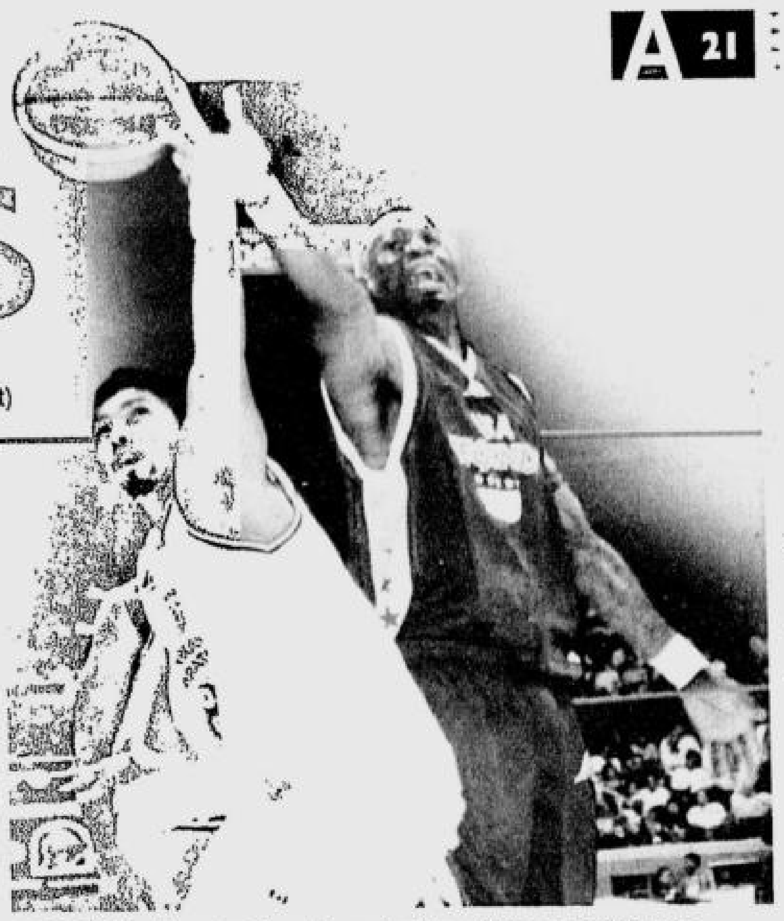
RP dribblers wear down USA Legends



DON Allado disputes the rebound with ex-Chicago Bull Dennis Rodman in yesterday's game at the Araneta Coliseum. ERIK ARAZAS

By Musong R. Castillo

TEAM PHILIPPINES TOOK THE USA LEGends out of its sweet spot last night, running the Americans to the ground and scoring at will from the perimeter to pound out a 110-102 victory in The Bad Boy Tour at the Araneta Coliseum.

Dondon Hontiveros and Ren-Ren Ritualo consistently fired triples and the Nationals held their own inside the paint despite their huge disadvantage in size to hammer out the win and put a negative end to Dennis Rodman's brief stint in the Philippines.

The young ones carried the fight for the Americans, with forward Olu Famutimi doing a lot of damage from inside and out.

And if it's any consolation, the 6-foot-5 Arkansas RimRocker in the NBA's Developmental League will surely be getting offers to play as an import in the PBA with the way he played.

"This (win) reinforces the fact that we have a National basketball team," Pilipinas Basketball coach Chot Reyes later said. "All we need is games to play."

Reyes shuffled fresh legs smartly all game and the Americans, who had six former NBA stars in their lineup, found the going rough with the Filipinos running at every given chance.

Famutimi finished with 40 points and wily guard Myron Allen tossed in 34 to lead the Americans.

Hontiveros wound up with 31 points, 20 of them in the first half, while Ritualo, in his usual streaky way, chipped in 17 markers.

All told, the Filipinos converted on 12-of-27 attempts from beyond the arc, with Hontiveros accounting for half of it and Ritualo three. Jimmy Alapag contributed 12 points, Asi Taulava 11 and Don Allado was the last player in double figures for Reyes with 10.

Rodman was not much of a factor, taking only two shots and making one for two points. He did grab a night-high 16 rebounds, though.

The scores:

RP TEAM 110—Hontiveros 31, Ritualo 17, Alapag 12, Taulava 11, Allado 10, Dela Cruz 8, Miller 7, Reavis 5, Belasco 3, DeVance 3, Cortez 3, Williams 0.

USA LEGENDS 102— Famutimi 40, Allen 34, Wilkerson 10, English 5, Reid 5, Boddicker 4, Rodman 2, Murphy 2, Dawkins 0.

Quarters: 27-25, 52-51, 86-77, 110-102.

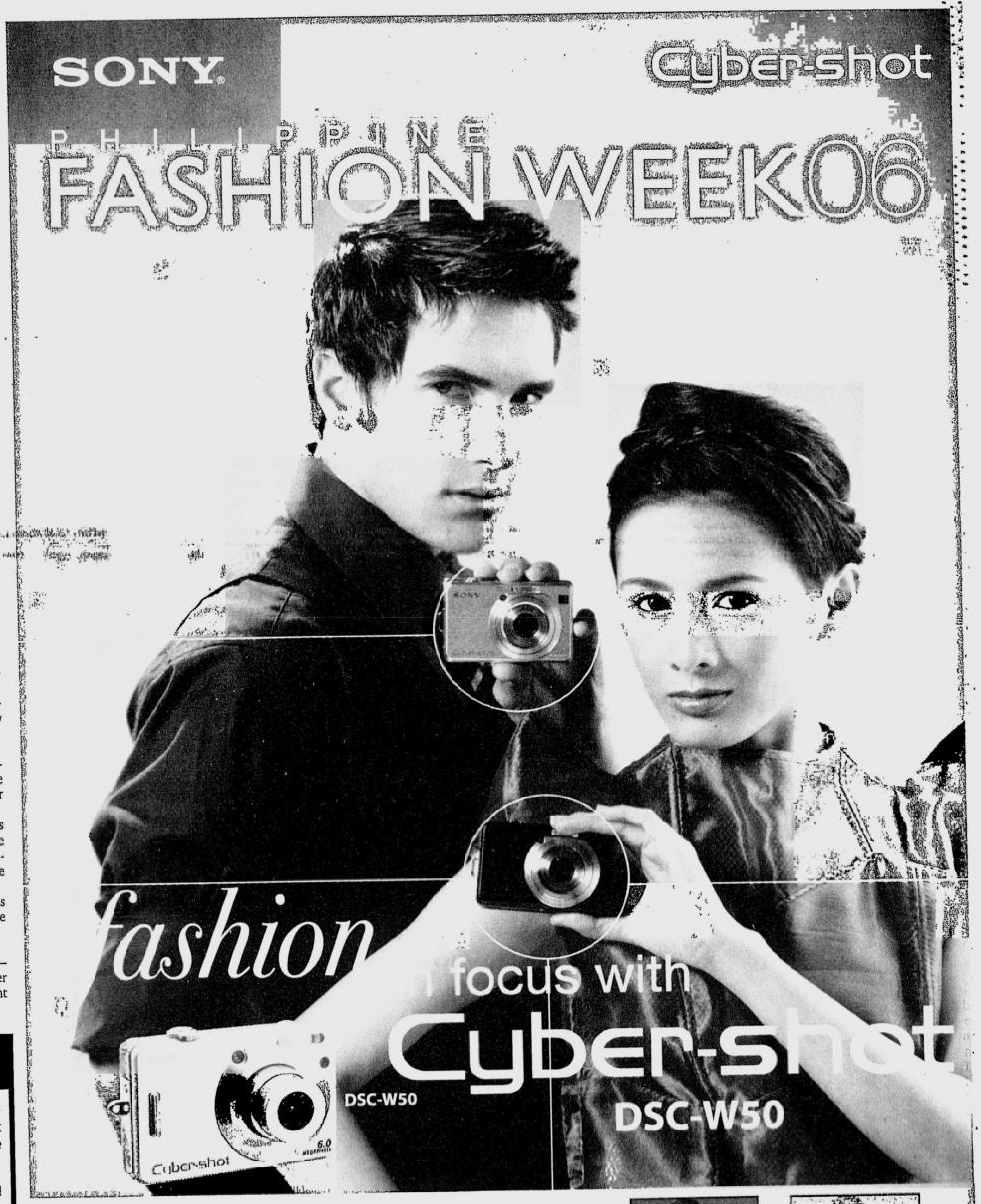
Notes: Except for wrinkles in his face, 59-year-old Calvin Murphy looked none the worse for wear, popping in jumpshot after jumpshot during the warmup.

Measured to be just 5-foot-9 with sneakers on, Murphy went on to become one of the finest little men to ever play in the NBA, earning the monicker "Pocket Rocket" over the years at Houston.

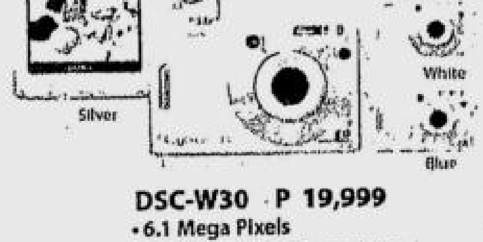
He did take some time to mingle with fans and joke around with kids who paid a huge amount to sit at court level.

* * *

Darryl Dawkins did add on some pounds—a lot of them actually—making the former Phildelphia 76er an even more imposing sight and an immovable presence.



Silver
Black



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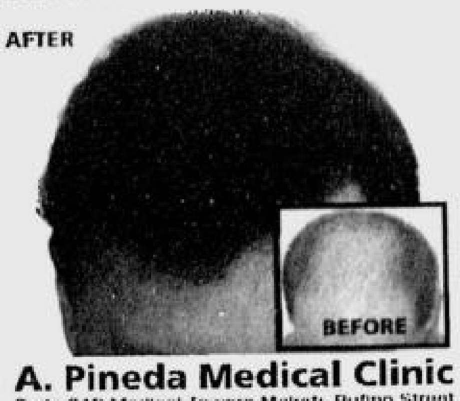

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Jewels stake solo lead vs Spinners

THE MONTAÑA JEWELS WILL TRY TO keep the solo lead against the inconsistent Magnolia Spinners in the PBL Unity Cup at 4 p.m. today at the San Andres Gym.

"It's hard to read Magnolia, its performance has been up and down," said Jewels coach Nel Parado of last conference's champion, which surprisingly hasn't scored back-to-back wins.

"But just like with the other teams in the league, we're prepared against them," added Parado.

The Granny Goose Tortillos are also cautious in their 2 p.m. tussle versus the TeleTech Titans.

Although struggling in its league debut, TeleTech's lone victory came against Granny Goose, 78-69, in the first round.

"It's a must win for us," said Tortillos coach Robert Sison. "We can't take them lightly. They have a bunch of big players and I think (Titans mentor Jerry) Codiñera is getting the rhythm of coaching."

The impressive campaign of the Jewels, who hold a league-best 7-2 record, has been anchored on point guards Froilan Baguion and Al Vergara.

Last Saturday, it was Vergara's turn to rescue the Jewels. He shot a game-high 17 points, including the winning triple with barely a second left, as Montaña nipped TeleTech, 64-63.

STANDINGS	W	L
Montaña	7	2
Toyota Otis	7	3
R. or Shine	7	3
G. Goose	5	4
Magnolia	4	5
Harbour	4	6
Hapee-PCU	3	7
TeleTech	1	8

GAMES TODAY
(*San Andres Gym*)
2 p.m.—Granny Goose vs TeleTech
4 p.m.—Montaña vs Magnolia

In contrast, the Spinners are coming off their worst performance this conference. With lead scorer Kelly Williams struggling offensively, the Spinners absorbed a lopsided 45-65 loss versus Granny Goose last Saturday.

The Tortillos cited their balanced scoring attack in the recent win that propelled them to fourth place at 5-4.

"We don't have the talent of other teams," said Sison. "Our lineup isn't that strong compared to the others, so we always have to work hard."

The Titans, on the other hand, have to work on their end-game poise after blowing huge leads in their last two games.

The league's last seed suffered another collapse as it blew a 15-point halftime advantage and fell to Montaña.

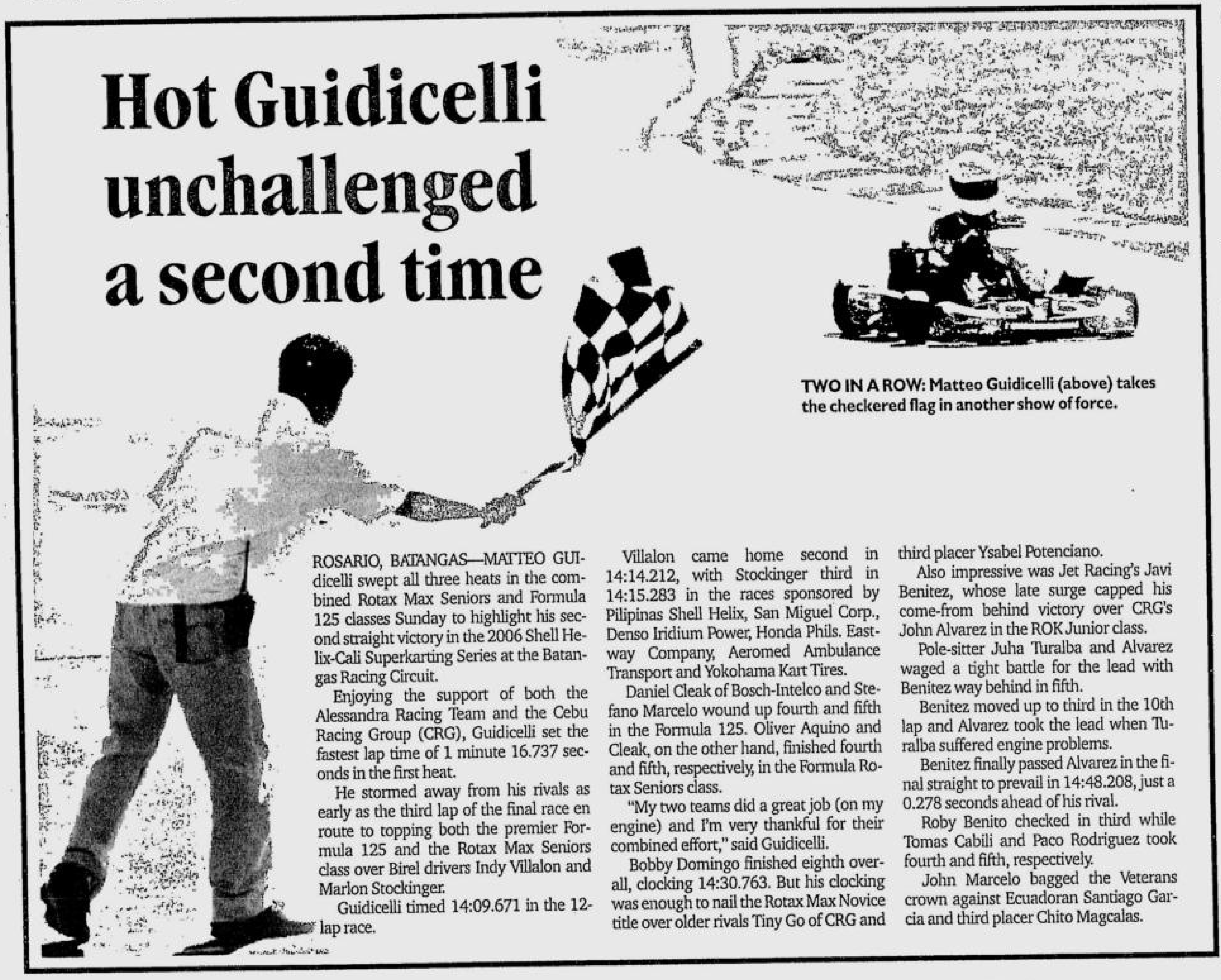
Meanwhile, league officials announced yesterday a one-game suspension for Harbour Centre star Joseph Yeo.

The former La Salle gunner was thrown out for hitting Rain or Shine's Gilbert Malabanan late in the third period of their match last Sunday.

The mercurial Yeo, marked all night by a rotation of Paintmaster guards, could not get his rhythm and was held to just four points.

Harbour Centre's Chico Lanete and Rain or Shine's Marvin Ortiguerra tied for the Player of the Week citation. *Jasmine W. Payo*

Hot Guidicelli unchallenged a second time



TWO IN A ROW: Matteo Guidicelli (above) takes the checkered flag in another show of force.

ROSARIO, BATANGAS—MATTEO GUIDICELLI swept all three heats in the combined Rotax Max Seniors and Formula 125 classes Sunday to highlight his second straight victory in the 2006 Shell Helix-Cali Superkarting Series at the Batangas Racing Circuit.

Enjoying the support of both the Alessandra Racing Team and the Cebu Racing Group (CRG), Guidicelli set the fastest lap time of 1 minute 16.737 seconds in the first heat.

He stormed away from his rivals as early as the third lap of the final race en route to topping both the premier Formula 125 and the Rotax Max Seniors class over Birel drivers Indy Villalon and Marlon Stockinger.

Guidicelli timed 14:09.671 in the 12-lap race.

Villalon came home second in 14:14.212, with Stockinger third in 14:15.283 in the races sponsored by Pilipinas Shell Helix, San Miguel Corp., Denso Iridium Power, Honda Phils. Eastway Company, Aeromed Ambulance Transport and Yokohama Kart Tires.

Daniel Cleak of Bosch-Intelco and Stefano Marcelo wound up fourth and fifth in the Formula 125. Oliver Aquino and Cleak, on the other hand, finished fourth and fifth, respectively, in the Formula Rotax Seniors class.

"My two teams did a great job (on my engine) and I'm very thankful for their combined effort," said Guidicelli.

Bobby Domingo finished eighth overall, clocking 14:30.763. But his clocking was enough to nail the Rotax Max Novice title over older rivals Tiny Go of CRG and third placer Ysabel Potenciano.

Also impressive was Jet Racing's Javi Benitez, whose late surge capped his come-from behind victory over CRG's John Alvarez in the ROK Junior class.

Pole-sitter Juha Turalba and Alvarez waged a tight battle for the lead with Benitez way behind in fifth.

Benitez moved up to third in the 10th lap and Alvarez took the lead when Turalba suffered engine problems.

Benitez finally passed Alvarez in the final straight to prevail in 14:48.208, just a 0.278 seconds ahead of his rival.

Roby Benito checked in third while Tomas Cabili and Paco Rodriguez took fourth and fifth, respectively.

John Marcelo bagged the Veterans crown against Ecuadoran Santiago Garcia and third placer Chito Magcalas.

Top Jungolf bets return to W. Wack west today

WACK WACK RETURNS AS HOST OF THE Samsung Jungolf Tour with 97 juniors and foreign residents disputing the top awards in four age-groups starting today at the club's west course in Mandaluyong.

Wolen Superal, the reigning world 11-12 champion, leads the field as he shoots for his fourth straight victory in Class B (13-14 years), a week after pulling off an impressive win in the grueling 108-hole Callaway Junior World qualifying tournament.

Fully recovered from a hip injury, the multititled Superal is expected to sustain his victory streak. His two sisters, Crystal Faith and Princess, are also tipped to rule the girls' Classes A and D.

Cyna Rodriguez is favored in the Class B division with Paulina Sotto looming as the dark horse. Wack Wack bet Andie Unson and Marvi Monsalve lead the girls' Class C field.

The Wack Wack leg is the fifth stop of the series jointly staged by the Junior Golf Foundation of the Philippines. Samsung and Philippine Airlines are the major backers while Callaway, Titleist, Mizuno, La Jolla, Taylor Made, Wilson, Ping, Auto Magic, Unilever, MCCI Air Liquid, INQUIRER Golf and Michael Guy are the other sponsors.

Simultaneous competitions in Class E and Class F will also be played at the short Riviera executive course with 16 kids, among them Rupert Saragoza and Chloe Reyes, entered.

The return of Wack Wack as venue of the summer circuit was made possible by club president and Comelec chair Ben Abalos and sports and games committee chair Pablo Soon.

STANDINGS	W	L
Visayas Division		
M. Lhuillier-Cebu	7	0
Cebu Landmaster	4	2
*Mantawi Traders	3	3
West Negros	0	4
*Toyota-Iloilo Warriors	0	5
Mindanao Division		
Iligan City	7	1
PacMan-GenSan	5	3
Pryce-MisOr	4	4
Montaña-Davao	4	4
Cagayan de Oro	0	8

** Still playing at presstime*

Traders tame Mustangs in MVBA

TALISAY CITY—RED-HOT DOROTEO Almacin sparked a fierce late offensive that carried the Mantawi Traders to an 80-73 victory over host West Negros College Mustangs in the ML Kwarta Padala Mindanao Visayas Basketball Association First Conference at the Talisay City Gym in Negros Occidental.

Almacin fired 10 of his personal-best 27 points in the payoff period as the Traders evened their record to 3-3 in the league backed by ML Kwarta Padala, Cokaliong Shipping Lines, Nature's Spring Drinking Water, Molten, Panasonic and Sulpicio Lines.

The reigning National Students champion Mustangs, egged on by their hometown fans, took a 57-54 lead entering the final period.

But the Traders of Mayor Thadeo Ouano, with Almacin on the firing end, unleashed a sizzling 26-16 rally in the last quarter to become the third team in the Visayas division to sweep the Mustangs.

The scores:

MANTAWI 80—Almacin 27, Sevilla 11, Berame 9, Guangco 9, Calo 8, Jueves 6, Akad 6, Pepito 2, Garcia 2.

WEST NEGROS 73—Vergara 21, Tizon 12, Olarte 12, Deocadis 9, Espinosa 7, Miravalles 7, Laurenio 3, Quilantang 2.

Quarters: 18-15, 33-30, 54-57, 80-73

Miracles still happen

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

SMUSH, LAMAR AND LUKE. WHO ARE THEY? And Sasha. Who he?

You don't know them from Adam, do you? But Kobe?

Aw, don't give me that look. Like Mayo, who turns 9 today and who is a Kobe diehard, you know Kobe from Phil to Shaq, right?

For starters, wasn't Kobe the "better-half" of Shaquille O'Neal in the triumphant Lakers of some 5, 6 years ago?

But before I proceed, let the numbers do the talking first.

Or—wait a second—better yet, let the stats awe you more than the unbelievable 99-98 overtime victory yesterday by the Los Angeles Lakers over the Phoenix Suns.

Kobe, in his patented pull-up, semi-fadeaway jumper, made the winning shot from the right corner of the key.

With four opposing arms partially blocking his view and time expiring, Kobe buried a ringless beauty as his ninth field goal in 14 tries hit nothing but net.

The hushed-up crowd thundered and shook the Staples Center in LA lasting more than 6.1 seconds, the exact time Kobe used in dribbling from near the scorers' table up to the time he heaved the game-winner.

The win was the Lakers' 12th in 13 home games this season, moving them a game away from advancing to the second round of the NBA playoffs.

The Lakers' 3-1 lead over the Suns was described as improbable, owing mainly to the fact that Los Angeles (45-37) is seeded seventh against No. 2 Phoenix (54-28), the highest scoring team in the regular season.

The past two games saw Los Angeles outrebound Phoenix, 42-41 in Game 4, and 53-34 in Game 3 even as Chris Mihm, the Lakers' No. 1 center, has missed 17 of the final 18 games of the regular season and hasn't played in the ongoing series due to a sprained right ankle.

And the Lakers are 3-1 going to Wednesday's (Manila time) Game 5 in Phoenix.

And the Suns are dealing with a Lakers coach (Phil Jackson) who owns 9 NBA championship rings in his last 14 seasons—6 in the Nineties coaching Chicago and 3 in the new millennium. As per the ever-reliable Loren "Doctor Stat" Manguiat, Jackson's last three NBA crowns with the Lakers came in 2000, 2001 and 2002.

I said here on April 27 that for the Lakers to defeat the Suns, all the Lakers must involve themselves in every game of the best-of-seven playoffs—and next hope a miracle would happen.

They involved themselves in Game 1 and they lost.

But in Games 2, 3 and 4, all the Lakers involved themselves again—and they won. A miracle?

Maybe. But as one creative guy said, "The Suns expected Kobe to arrive, instead the Lakers came."

They all came in all four previous games—Smush Parker, Lamar Odom, Luke Walton, and even Sasha Vujacic—with Kobe Bryant as their leader. They won three. If that's not cool, what is?

The Lakers' third straight win yesterday came from a 17-foot, overtime jump shot by Kobe—after Smush, Lamar and Luke had done their bit in Phil Jackson's idea of a new "team song" for the Lakers.

Smush triggered Bryant's overtime-sending, fast break shot with 0.7 seconds left that tied the game at 90—Smush swiping the ball away from Steve Nash.

Nash, last season's MVP, was to commit another nasty mistake when he dillydallied near the timeline, inexplicably stopping there for no apparent reason.

That allowed for a quick double-team on him by Lamar, who had earlier forced a tie at 95 on a 3-point play, and Luke. Luke, the son of the legendary Bill Walton of the Boston Celtics, would eventually force a jump ball on Nash with the Suns up, 98-97, in overtime.

Luke tapped the tip to Kobe, who, after saving the ball from getting out of bounds at the sidelines, zigzagged his way to the right corner of the key to unload the night's killer bomb in the nick of time.

They will all come again in Game 5 in Phoenix tomorrow, Wednesday—Smush, Lamar, Luke and even Sasha—with Kobe as their undisputed Custer, Patton, or Dagohoy, if not Diego Silang if you will.

Phil Jackson will be there, too, to continue directing his new "team song." And, in case you still don't know, no team under Jackson has lost a series when leading 2-1. The count is now at 22-0.

A miracle, indeed, could be in the offing.

***

FASTBREAK: The remains of Philippine Post Office's Paul Beltran, the departed husband of my niece, Chatty Boluso, will be laid to rest today. A prayer for Paul's soul will be highly appreciated.

***

Comments to menju@pldtdsl.net

SPORTSWATCH

Team war heats up in Legenda triathlon

AT LEAST 12 TEAMS HAVE SIGNED UP FOR THE LEGENDA SUBIC BAY International Triathlon, the country's premier triathlon event, on May 7. Early entries came from the Polo Tri Club of Makati, which is fielding four teams—the Polo Tri Superstar, Polo Tri Hardcore, Polo Tri Amanda Carpio, and the Polo Tri Ghostbusters; Clark-Angeles City's Tribe 8 Tri Team, CMG-Duathlon Team captained by 2006 Asian Duathlon champion Ryan "Bad Boy" Mendoza; Herbalife Tri Team; Los Trantados of Los Baños; Fitness First of Manila and Triad of Davao City. According to Tom Carrasco, Triathlon Association of the Philippines president, some 200 racers from nine countries have registered for the event, which is being held in cooperation with the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority and the Philippine Sports Commission. Sponsors are Legenda Hotel, Speedo swim apparel, Powerbar, Endurance sports drink, David's Day Spa and Salon, Asian Center for Insulation and Herbalife. Entries will be accepted until May 6. For inquiries, call 0916-2653109 or 812-5249, or email info@triathlon.org.ph or log on to website www.triathlon.org.ph.

Bote, Alcala advance to JVC jrs semis

MICHAEL BOTE POSTED A HARD-EARNED 21-16, 21-19 VICTORY OVER Gerald Sibayan while Malvinne Alcala scored a walkover win over Camille Chu to lead the semifinalists in the boys' and girls' 12-under division of the JVC Open Junior Badminton Championships at SM Marilao over the weekend. Bote next faces Bernardito Ablang, who whipped Thomas Sayco, 21-9, 21-11. The other semifinal pairing pits Lance Bautista against Rolando Fernandez. Bautista bested Bryan Ocenar, 21-11, 21-19, while Fernandez routed Ralph Marasigan, 21-12, 21-5. Marikina Sports Hub's Alcala cruised to the Final 4 against Centro Atletico's Michelle Millan, who won by default over Elizabeth Manalang. Samantha Santos ripped Michelle Hernandez, 21-14, 21-14, to set up a duel with Gelita Castillo, who won over Regina dela Merced.

Go-for-Gold boxing visits Silang

THE POPULAR TOUCH MOBILE GO-FOR-GOLD TAKES ITS EXCITING ACT to Barangay Lumil, Silang, Cavite, today. The boxing show on wheels is also sponsored by Pacific Heights. Amateur Boxing Association head Manny T. Lopez thanked Rep. Crispin Remulla, Mayor Areng Poblete, Vice Mayor Gil Linaja and barangay captain Leon de Guzman for their support for the event.

Round 2 of Roligon cockfest under way

THE SECOND ROUND OF THE "TUKAAN 5-COCK DERBY" KICKS OFF AT 5 p.m. today at Roligon Mega Cockpit with 70 fights on the roster. Seventeen entries with two points each lead the P2 million derby sponsored by Lakpue Drug Inc. and Thunderbird Enertone and hosted by Rolly Ligon. Among the frontrunners are Mt. Panamao, DTM Credentials, EMP II, Thunderbee, RDA Smasher, Red Ranger, Pambihira, El Balasador, Roxan I, Aero 76, RJ 2006, CPA Sator and Astig.

Cocks weigh-in for GCAP derby today

PARTICIPANTS IN TOMORROW'S GENTLEMEN COCKERS ASSOCIATION of the Philippines (GCAP) 5-cock derby at San Juan Coliseum must submit all entries from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. today. The derby supported by Sagupaan Complexor 3000 begins at 5 p.m. tomorrow with 70 fights on tap. For registration inquiries, call 725-5665 or 725-5369. Last Saturday, Gerry Ramos' Against All Odds entry topped the Super Big Event 7-cock derby with seven points.

Makati Coliseum 6-cocker gets going

THE THIRD-ROUND ELIMINATIONS OF THE "SUMMER SALPUKAN" 6-cock derby blasts off at 5 p.m. today at the Makati Coliseum featuring 70 encounters. The fourth and fifth rounds of the derby sponsored by B-Meg Derby Ace unfold on May 4 and 6. The two-day championship round is slated May 11 and 13. A cash pot of P4.4 million awaits the winners. For inquiries, call 896-3545 or 895-6475.

Kobe jumper shades Suns

Wizards, Bulls, Kings tie playoff rivals

KOBE Bryant celebrates after scoring the game-winning shot in overtime against the Suns in Game 4. REUTERS

LOS ANGELES—THE LOS ANGELES LAKERS MAY NO LONGER BE a one-man team, but they know where to go with the ball when the game is on the line.

Kobe Bryant's 17-foot jumper as time expired in overtime gave the Lakers an improbable 99-98 victory over the Phoenix Suns on Sunday and a 3-1 lead in the first-round playoff series.

The Lakers, who have won the last three games, can win the best-of-seven series Tuesday night in Phoenix. A sixth game, if necessary, would be played Thursday night at Staples Center.

The Suns appeared to have the game won late in the fourth quarter and again in overtime, but the Lakers took advantage of two critical mistakes by Phoenix star Steve Nash.

Nash made a 3-pointer with 50 seconds left in overtime to give the Suns a 98-95 lead. Bryant's layup with 11.7 seconds to go drew the Lakers within one point, and Luke Walton tied Nash up with 6.1 seconds remaining.

Walton won the tip, with Bryant chasing the ball down near the scorer's table and then dribbling to the right corner of the key, where his ninth field goal in 14 tries swished through cleanly.

The Lakers then mobbed their superstar, who has become more of a facilitator than a scorer during this series, with his output dropping more than 12 points from his 35.4-point average during the regular season.

Lamar Odom led the Lakers with 25 points, eight rebounds and five assists. Bryant had 24 points and eight assists, Kwame Brown added 12 points and 10 rebounds, and Devean George scored 11.

Nash led the Suns with 22 points and 11 assists, but scored only six after halftime.

The Lakers forced overtime on Bryant's fast-break basket with 0.7 seconds remaining in the fourth quarter, tying the game at 90.

Wizards 106, Cavaliers 96

At Washington, With LeBron James suddenly, stunningly, quiet after a tremendous first half, Gilbert Arenas scored 20 of his 34 points in the fourth quarter to lead the Wizards' comeback and tie the first-round series at 2-2.

As dominant as James was early, setting franchise playoff records for points in a quarter (18) and half (25), he was nowhere to be found at times in the second half. He took only three shots in the third quarter, missed all, and wound up with 38 points.

Bulls 93, Heat 87

At Chicago, Kirk Hinrich scored 21 points and hit a key 3-pointer with 1:09 left to lead the Bulls past Miami, evening the series 2-2.

With Shaquille O'Neal in foul trouble for much of the game, the Bulls built a 13-point lead in the third quarter, only to fall behind in the fourth before pulling the game out. Game 5 in the best-of-seven series is Tuesday in Miami.

Kings 102, Spurs 84

At Sacramento, California, Bonzi Wells had 25 points and 17 rebounds, Brad Miller added 19 points and the eighth-seeded Kings rolled through the second half of their second straight home victory.

Mike Bibby scored 16 points and Ron Artest had 14 despite early foul trouble, but his teammates again followed his aggressive lead for a blowout victory over the slumping Spurs, who won the first two games of the series at home. *AP*

SOLAR Sports will air the Dallas-Memphis tussle at 8 a.m. today

WANG: Repentant

China nat'l five recalls Wang Zhizhi

BEIJING—CHINA'S FIRST NBA star Wang Zhizhi has earned a recall to the national team after four years in the wilderness following his refusal to play in the 2002 Asian Games.

Last month, an apologetic Wang returned to his homeland admitting that he had made a mistake and asked to be reconsidered for national duty.

The plea was successful and Wang was among the 18 players announced by the Chinese Basketball Association (CBA) on Sunday for a training camp in preparation for the World Championships in August, the official state news agency Xinhua said.

Wang paved the way for Chinese NBA players Yao Ming and Menk Barteer when he signed for the Dallas Mavericks in 2001, but the center was expelled from the national squad for opting out of representing China in Busan, South Korea four years ago. *Reuters*

Bonds breaks Ruth's mark

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA—Giants slugger Barry Bonds is still chasing Babe Ruth for second on the all-time home run list, but he passed the baseball legend in another statistical category Sunday.

Bonds posted his 1,357th extra base hit Sunday, passing Ruth for third all-time.

It wasn't much help for San Francisco, who fell 8-2 to Arizona.

Bonds, with 711 career home runs, remains three shy of matching Ruth (714) for second on the all-time home run list, which is headed by Hank Aaron's record of 755.

But Bonds's bid to rewrite the record books—he set the single season home run record of 73 in 2001—has lately been tainted by baseball's swirling steroid scandal. *AFP*

Lady Dolphins pin Warriors' 3rd loss

By Marc Anthony Reyes

PHILIPPINE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY overcame a sloppy first set to repulse University of the East, 17-25, 25-20, 25-21, 25-19, last night and register its second win in the Shakey's V-League at the Blue Eagle Gym.

The Lady Dolphins, surprised by the Lady Warriors' show of force in the opening set, put their act together behind a well-balanced attack in the succeeding sets to raise their record to 2-1.

Although reinforced by Catherine Sotejo and Rochelle Crisologo, the Lady Warriors failed to approximate their solid play earlier, lapsing into a rash of errors that led to a third straight defeat.

Twenty-one-year-old Brenda Lopez accounted for 16 points, including 13 spikes, while Cathlea Villaluz accounted for the same spike output in leading PCU.

But it was the shifting PCU defense that did the most damage to UE which failed to sustain its opening assault behind top attackers Suzanne Roces and Angelica Perez, who buried 14 spikes apiece, most of them in the first set.

Reinforcement Amelia Guanco hit 14 points while Mary Grace Magtibay and Arlene Bernardo chipped in 13 points each for the Lady Dolphins, who finished the match in one hour and 37 minutes.

Roces and Perez both finished with 16 points, supported by Sotejo who had 12 markers for UE which committed 92 errors as against PCU's 85.

The Lady Warriors suffered back-to-back losses to Ateneo (25-20, 25-17, 21-25, 20-25, 15-10) in the inaugurals and Far Eastern University (25-22, 22-25, 25-11, 25-18) last Saturday.

On the other hand, the Lady Dolphins took a 25-14, 25-20, 25-20 defeat from Adamson on opening day before jumping back in contention with a win over San Sebastian.

In the second game, San Sebastian beat Adamson, 15-25, 17-25, 24-26, for its first victory in three outings. Adamson absorbed its first loss for a 2-1 slate.

BARCELONA TITLE

Nadal moves ahead of Borg

BARCELONA—RAFAEL NADAL OUTMUSCLED fellow Spaniard Tommy Robredo, 6-4, 6-4, 6-0, to win the Barcelona Open on Sunday for his 47th consecutive claycourt win.

Nadal moved ahead of Bjorn Borg into second place in the Open Era list of consecutive wins on the surface.

"I think I usually play my best matches when I get to the final," Nadal said.

"I had a difficult match against (Jarkko) Nieminen in the quarter-finals but today I think was probably my best match of the week."

After two well-contested sets, Nadal cruised through the third to complete a successful title defense in two hours 19 minutes for his third tournament win of the year and the 15th of his career.

Nadal is now just six wins behind the record holder, Argentine Guillermo Vilas who set his mark in 1977.

The 19-year-old Nadal's last loss on the surface was to Russian Igor Andreev in April 2005.

"I am very happy (to pass Borg). He and Vilas are two of the best players of all time," he said.

"I am playing well but I am just starting out and for now my motivation is to have two days' rest and prepare for the Rome (Masters Series) event." Nadal broke serve in the third game of the match and, after saving two break points in the eighth game, held again two games later to take the opening set.

Sixth seed Robredo attacked his younger compatriot's backhand with some success but a huge Nadal forehand gave him the chance to serve for the opening set at 5-4.

Robredo showed great spirit to save two set points before forcing a break point of his own, but an errant backhand gave Nadal the reprieve and he held on to move ahead by two sets to love.

Once the top seed had broken serve again in the opening game of the third set, the fight drained out of Robredo and Nadal ripped through the next five games to clinch victory.

"The first set was close but the second set was very close," said Robredo. "I had 4-3 15-40, then made one stupid mistake and he played a good point and that was it.

"If I had won that game and the set then maybe it would have been different but he is a very good player and it is very tough." *Reuters*

RAFAEL Nadal climbs to No. 2 on all-time list of clay victories AP

So stuns WGM in Dubai

FILIPINO FIDE MASTER WESLEY So stunned Woman Grandmaster Maria Sergeeva of Kazakhstan on Sunday to boost his bid for an International Master result in the eight round of the 8th Dubai Open at the Dubai Chess and Culture Club in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

With his fourth win against two draws and two losses , the 12-year-old So raised his total to 5.0 points and climbed to a share of 25th to 42nd places in the $40,000 tournament.

So will be facing 17-year-old IM Abhijeet Gupta of India in the ninth and final round, needing a win to garner his first IM result. Gupta, the 2002 Indian junior champion, holds an Elo of 2449 against So's 2250.

Sharing the lead with 6.5 points each are third seed GM Gabriel Sargissian of Armenia), No.8 GM Sergey Fedorchuk of Ukraine) and No. 11 GM Tigran Petrosian of Armenia. *NM Marlon Bernardino*

Asiad buildup a priority, says PSC commish

THERE IS NOTHING MORE URGENT A task for Philippine sports now than the country's preparations for the coming Asian Games.

Commissioner Leon Montemayor of the Philippine Sports Commission stressed this yesterday as he called on all concerned that "this is the Asian Games year" and that Team Philippines, coming off its breakthrough win in the Southeast Asian Games, has a tough task ahead.

"I urge the Philippine Olympic Committee, the national sports associations (NSAs) and my colleagues in the Philippine Sports Commission to make our coming Asian Games campaign in Doha, Qatar, the main priority," he said.

Montemayor added that "irritants," like the recently finished PSC-NSAs debate on financial assistance liquidation, "has no place in sports."

"It may look healthy, having arguments and exchanging opinions, but these should not take so much time and effort. Sports is about the athletes, not the sports officials."

Montemayor, in charge of the PSC grassroots development program especially in Mindanao, also assured NSAs, particularly those having liquidation problems, that the PSC is not turning its back on them.

"The PSC remains a solid partner of the NSAs, the POC and most especially the Filipino athletes. The PSC may not be financially stable right now, but it is still a reliable ally," he said.

Montemayor said finding ways to provide the athletes the best training possible for the coming Games should be a concern for everybody.

"Let us become Team Philippines again and try to score another victory in Doha," he said.

PRISAA CHAMPS: The Scorpions of Centro Escolar University-Malolos pose for posterity after beating powerhouse and perennial champion University of the Assumption-Pampanga in the regional Private Schools Athletic Association (Prisaa) basketball championship at the UAP gym in San Fernando, Pampanga, recently. Last year's second runner-up, the CEU Scorpions stung their way up to the finals, overcoming five of their six opponents in their bracket. The squad is headed by Dr. Juliana M. Alvaro, AVP for CEU-Malolos, acting sports director Banjo C. Santos, and coach Ferdie Magpayo.

Sy seeks AF3 crown

SY

FILIPINO RACING Wonder Boy Tyson Sy feels that everything he needs to make a serious bid for the 2006 Asian Formula Three (AF3) Series is in place and that he has an excellent chance of taking this year's championship.

Sy, 18, has renewed his contract with the Speedtech Asia organization under Edgen Dy-Liacco-the same outfit that he drove with in last year's series, wherein he was the only Filipino to post victories. As part of a comprehensive buildup for 2006, Sy will drive a Dallara F304 chassis, which is technologically superior in many respects to the F301 that he used last year.

Sy, who is sponsored by Demvels Motorsports, PLDT Global, First Pacific, PLDT MyDSL, Bosch Automotive, Nissan Motor Philippines Inc., Petron Ultron, A-Toy Body Kits, ConceptOne, H&R Springs and Xenon Bulbs, posted highly competitive times in his fist outing in the car today.

"The car felt good and the engine felt crisp," said Sy. "I think we can still take several more seconds off our times in our next tests."

Kim hangs on to win

ORLANDO, FLORIDA—SOUTH KOREAN MI HYUN Kim claimed her first US LPGA Tour title since 2002 here Sunday with a two-shot triumph in the inaugural Ginn Clubs and Resorts Open. Kim, who claimed her sixth LPGA crown to go with 11 international victories, carded a one-under-par 71 for a 12-under total of 276. She was two shots in front of Mexico's Lorena Ochoa, who closed with a 66, and Hall of Famer Karrie Webb of Australia, who shot a 67. *AFP*

Couch saves par, title

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA—CHRIS COUCH chipped in from 26 feet to save par at the last hole and win the PGA Zurich Classic by one stroke here on Sunday. Couch, who earned $1.08 million, shot a seven-under-par 65 for a 19-under total of 269. Fred Funk and Charles Howell were one stroke behind at 18-under. Funk signed for a 10-under 62 while Howell fired a 65. *AFP*

RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Casanova (5), Crystal City (2), Dona Nene (4)
Race 2—(Qrt/Tri)—Speed Assault (4), Country Boy (3), Pentagon (1), Pretty Pretty Girl (2)
Race 3—(Qrt/Tri)— Magpakailanman (2), Renzie Stays (1), Manila Magic (7), Candu (8)
Race 4—(Qrt/Tri)—Gung Ho (3), Speed King (2), Kim Possible (4), Mercurian/Quasimodo (5)
Race 5—(Qrt/Tri)—Red Storm (3), Gold Money (7), Aminin (2), My Lady Hannah (4)
Race 6—(Qrt/Tri)—Showtime lady (3), Five O'clock (2), Real Triomphe (6), Battle Hero (1)
Race 7—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Divine Right (9), Jaile (2), Kalashnikov (7), Magiliw (5), Sir Olizon (3)
Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Quick Pick (6), Patutina (11), Leading Man (4), Samahan (3), Material Trick (9), Earth Angel (1)

SPORTS

Pagadian dribblers trounce Parañaque

THE PAGADIAN EXPLORERS extended Spring Parañaque's woes by beating the Cooking Oil Masters, 84-76, Saturday night in the 2006 Guerrero Brandy-NBC national basketball championship at the San Dionisio multipurpose gym in Parañaque City.

Former pro Peter Naron mocked Spring's defenses to score 22 points and power the Explorers of Mayor Sammy Co past the Spring squad of NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla.

The Explorers improved their southern division record to 4-2 while dealing Spring-Parañaque its third straight loss after starting with two wins in the tournament sponsored by Panasonic, Sulpicio Lines, Nature's Spring, Regent Foods, Spring Cooking Oil, Firefly Lightings, Molten and Prime Channel.

Over at the USA gym in Iloilo City, Batang Tagaytay of NBC executive president and Mayor Bambol Tolentino dropped a 29-13 bomb in the third quarter to hold off the Iloilo Warriors, 76-74.

With Tito Reyes, Jimboy Robillos and Niño Marquez leading the assault, Tagaytay overcame a 38-42 halftime deficit to move ahead, 67-55.

STANDINGS	W	L
North Division		
Bacchus/Harbour	4	2
Batang Tagaytay	4	3
Forward Taguig	3	2
Spring Parañaque	2	3
Pangasinan	1	3
Laguna-Sta. Rosa	0	5
South Division		
Ozamiz	4	0
North Cotabato Braves	5	3
Pagadian Explorers	4	2
Iligan	4	3
Valencia	2	3
Iloilo Warriors	1	4

The scores:

PAGADIAN 84—Naron 22, Gatumbato 14, Flores 12, Daja 11, Cortez 9, Salud 9, Marata 3, Omandan 2, Quilo 2.

PARAÑAQUE 76—Morante 12, Reyes 12, Capobres 9, Yee 9, Neo 8, Epondulan 6, Yambao 6, De Castro 6, Bamson 4, Manuel 2.

Quarters: 22-22, 41-40, 60-57, 84-76

* * *

TAGAYTAY 76—Reyes 14, Robillos 12, Marquez 11, Gulyab 11, Mallari 10, Genido 7, Mendoza 6, Pellejero 3, Jorge 2, Finullar 0, Mordeno 0.

ILOILO 74—Senierez 19, Sanz 10, Balgos 10, Sinco 9, Bautista 7, Leonida 5, Antenor-Cruz 5, Sencil 4, Poral 0.

Quarters: 19-22, 38-42, 67-55, 76-74

Listing under way for New Balance 25K Power Race

REGISTRATION FOR THE NEW BALANCE 25K POWER RACE slated May 28 at the Bonifacio Global City starts today at the Vasquez Madrigal Plaza Building at 51 Annapolis Street, in Greenhills, San Juan. Organizers said that aside from the 25K event, won last year by Athens Olympian Eduardo Buenavista, a 5K fun run and a 10K run will also be held. Cash prizes, trophies, gift packs and certificates await the top finishers. A corporate competition will also be held in the 10K run while the 5K fun run features an intercollegiate event. Other registration centers are at the New Balance and The Athletes Foot, both located at Glorietta, Ayala Center in Makati; Planet Sports Rockwell, Makati; The Athletes Foot Ermita, Manila; New Balance Festival Mall, Alabang; and Planet Sports ViraMall, Greenhills. Entry deadline is May 14, while the last day of registration at the Vasquez Madrigal Building is May 23. Regisration fee is P300.

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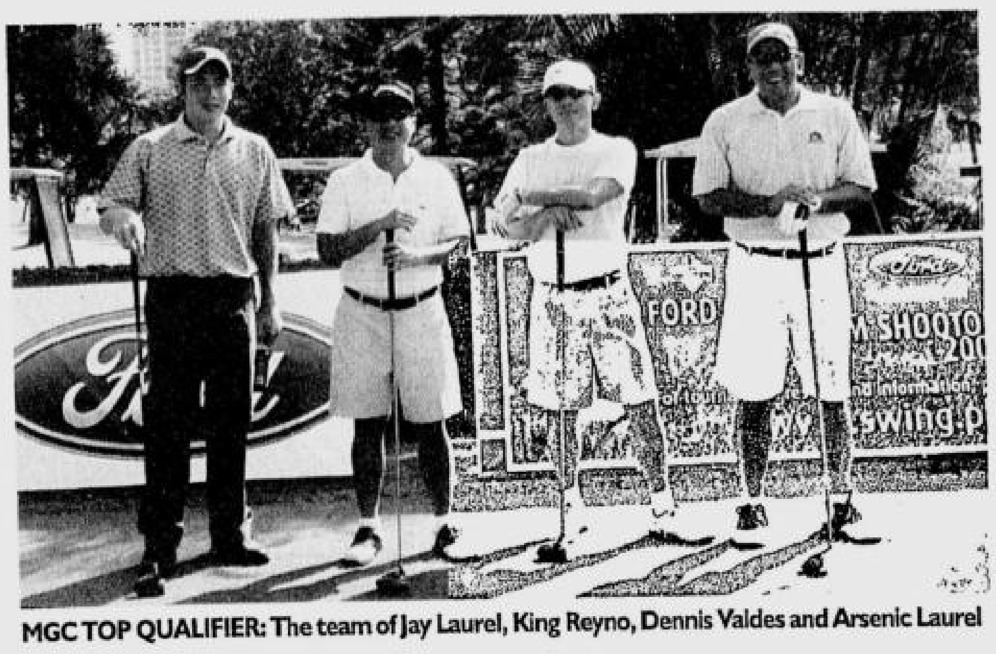


MGC TOP QUALIFIER: The team of Jay Laurel, King Reyno, Dennis Valdes and Arsenic Laurel

NAT'L TEAM SHOOTOUT

135 advance to tough Ford Satellite finals

A TOTAL OF 135 TEAMS FROM AN ORIGINAL field of 550 survived the elimination stage and will now shoot for Grand Finals berths in the five Satellite finals of the Ford National Team Shootout.

The field will be pruned down further to 60 teams which will advance to the Grand Finals of the unprecedented tournament organized by the Federation of Golf Clubs and Swing Magazine.

In all, the elimination stage of the tournament, which uses the modified scramble format, featured 2,200 golfers from 25 clubs from Baguio to Cagayan de Oro.

The Grand Finals kick off at The Orchard on May 25 and at Sta. Elena on May 26.

An all-expense paid trip to the spectacular Spring City Golf and Leisure Resort in Kunming City, China—arguably one of the world's best golf courses—awaits the team grand champion.

The second of the three-stage competition starts this Friday at the Cebu Country Club, site of the Visayas-Mindanao Satellite Finals, and at The Orchard Golf and Country Club in Dasmariñas, Cavite, venue of the Luzon West Satellite Finals.

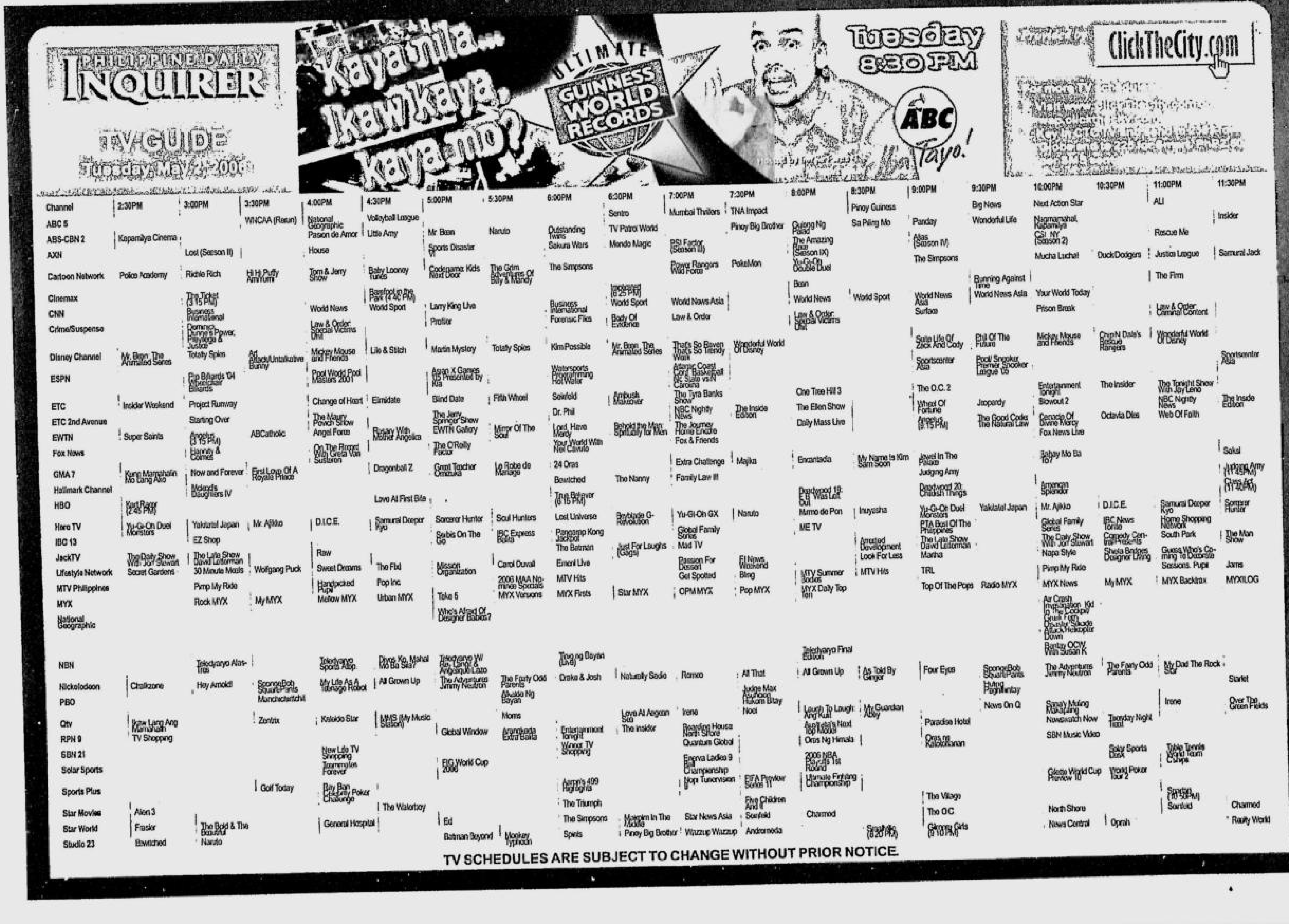
Participating clubs in the Vis-Min Satellite are Cebu Country Club, Alta Vista, Fairways and Blue Water, Pueblo de Oro, Iloilo Golf Club and Negros Occidental Golf and Country Club.

Vying in the Luzon West tournament are Manila Southwoods, Riviera, Sherwood Hills, Eagle Ridge and The Orchard.

The two tournaments will be followed by the Satellite Finals for Luzon North on May 11 at Luisita and features teams from Camp John Hay, Mimosa, Royal Northwoods, Baguio Country Club, and host Luisita; Luzon South (Mt. Malarayat, Sta. Elena, Canlubang, Tagaytay Highlands/Midlands and Ayala Greenfield Estates) on May 12 at Malarayat; and Luzon East (Wack Wack, Valley Golf, Manila Golf Club, Alabang, Eastridge and Forest Hills) on May 13 at Wack Wack.

The Ford National Team Shootout is presented by Ford Group Phils. and sponsored by Rudy Project, VMV Group, St. Francis, Sea Air, Citibank, Asian Spirit, Adidas Eyewear, Bosch, and Raymundo Trophies and Sculptures.

ACTION in the Alabang CC eliminations



PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER TV GUIDE Tuesday, May 2, 2006

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PACQUIAO, here with Larios, is giving away free tickets for their bout.

Pacquiao has one concern

By Nini Valera

MANNY PACQUIAO IS WORRIED THAT THE P2.5 million worth of general admission tickets that he plans to give away for free—so that more people could watch his bout with Mexican fighter Oscar Larios at the Araneta Coliseum on July 2—might cause a stampede.

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The network has acquired the rights from Pacquiao's MP Promotions to mount the boxing event, dubbed "Mano a Mano," and to televise and market the fight in the Philippines and other countries.

"*Baka magka*-stampede," said Pacquiao. "We're being very careful."

The network's first anniversary live presentation of the game show "Wowowee" at the Philsports Arena in Pasig last February, had resulted in a stampede that killed 71 people.

A source said the cost of the free tickets for Pacquiao's game would most likely come from the champ's share of profits.

ABS-CBN is reportedly spending about $4 million to mount the event.

Sky-high

The cost for anything that involves Pacquiao has risen sky-high, according to movie producer Rose Flaminiano. She has signed the boxer to a three-movie deal, the first of which is the bio-pic "Pacquiao," directed by Joel Lamangan, due for release next month.

Flaminiano told INQUIRER Entertainment after the press con that Pacquiao's talent fee as an actor has likewise rocketed.

For his last film, "Lisensyadong Kamao," produced by Violet Films, the boxer told INQUIRER earlier, he received P650,000.

"Some producers will now find his talent fee very stiff," Flaminiano said. "It runs in the millions. But I went on and signed him—even if the contract stipulates that I will make the movies whether he wins or loses his next fight. I believe he will win. And even if he loses, I believe that he will continue to be idolized by millions of Filipinos."

Jericho Rosales plays Pacquiao in Flaminiano's movie. After the press con, Pacquiao joined the actor for a photo shoot.

"I had to have my hair straightened for the part," said Jericho, who has curly hair. "It's tough keeping it straight. But I'm doing it for Manny."

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3	THE SENTINEL	1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:55, 11:05	PG-13
4	SILENT HILL	11:20, 2:20, 5:20, 8:20, 11:05	R-13

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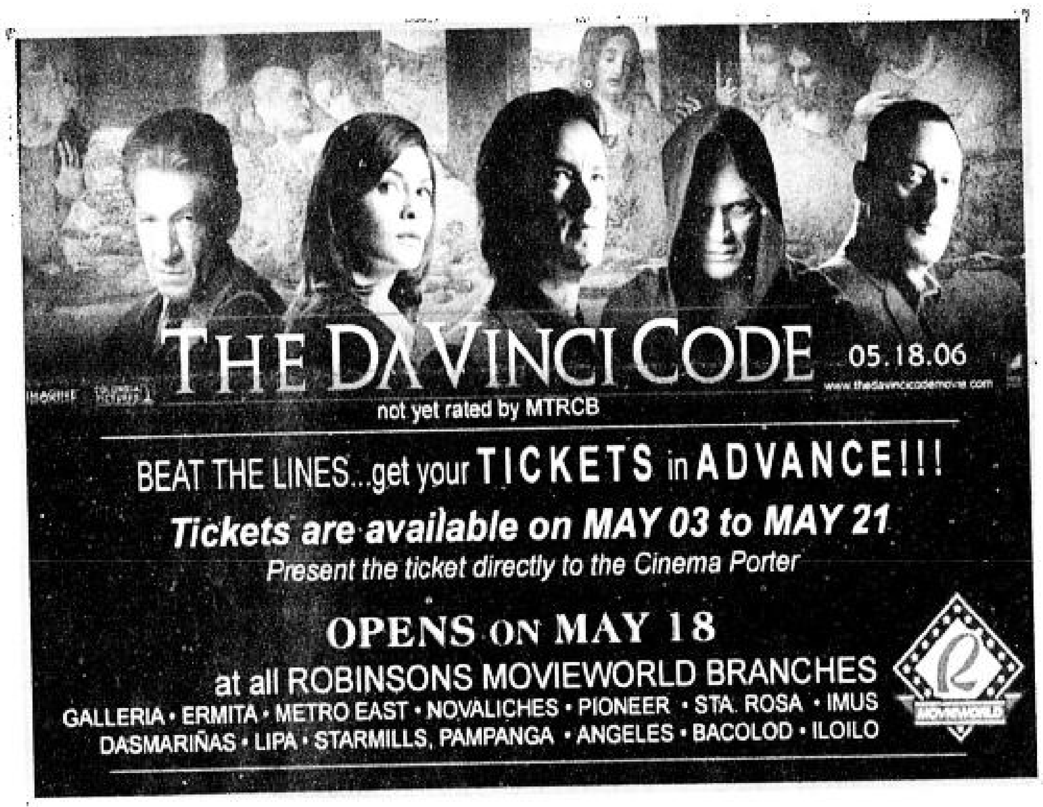

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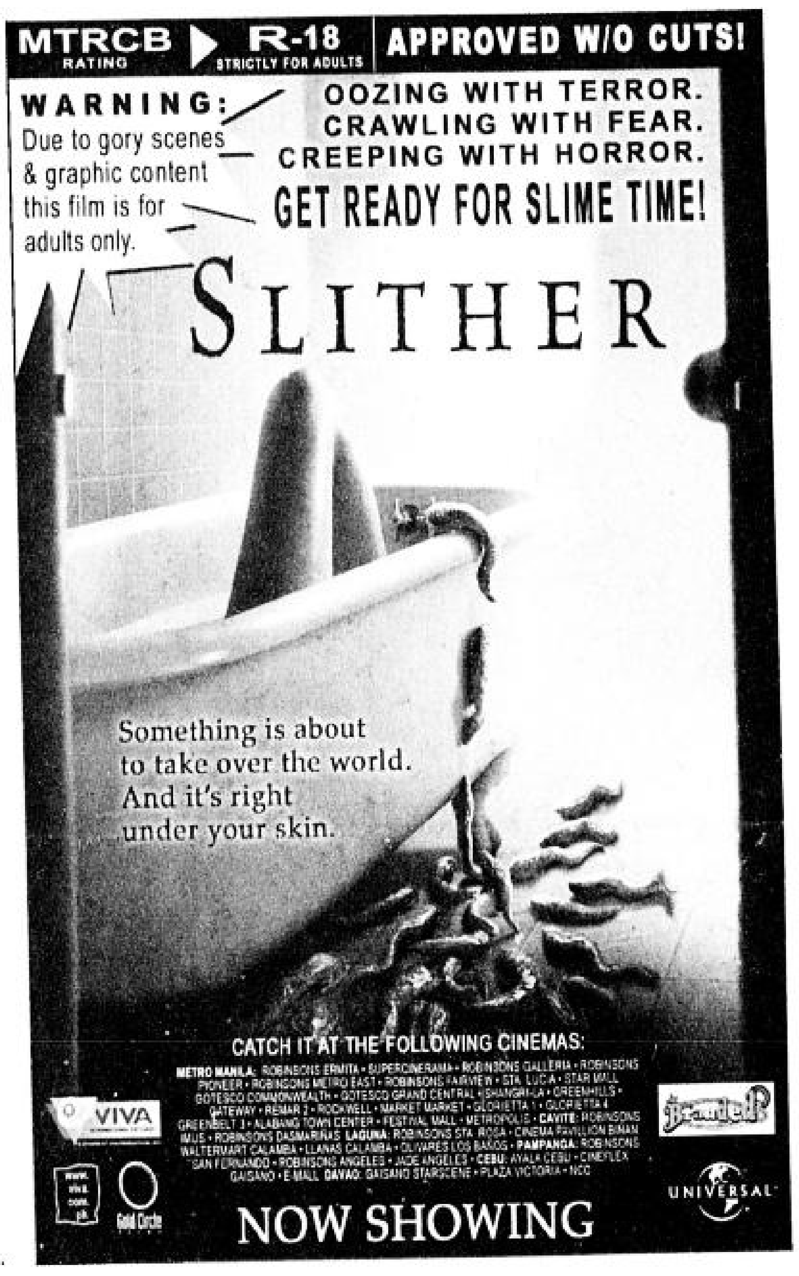

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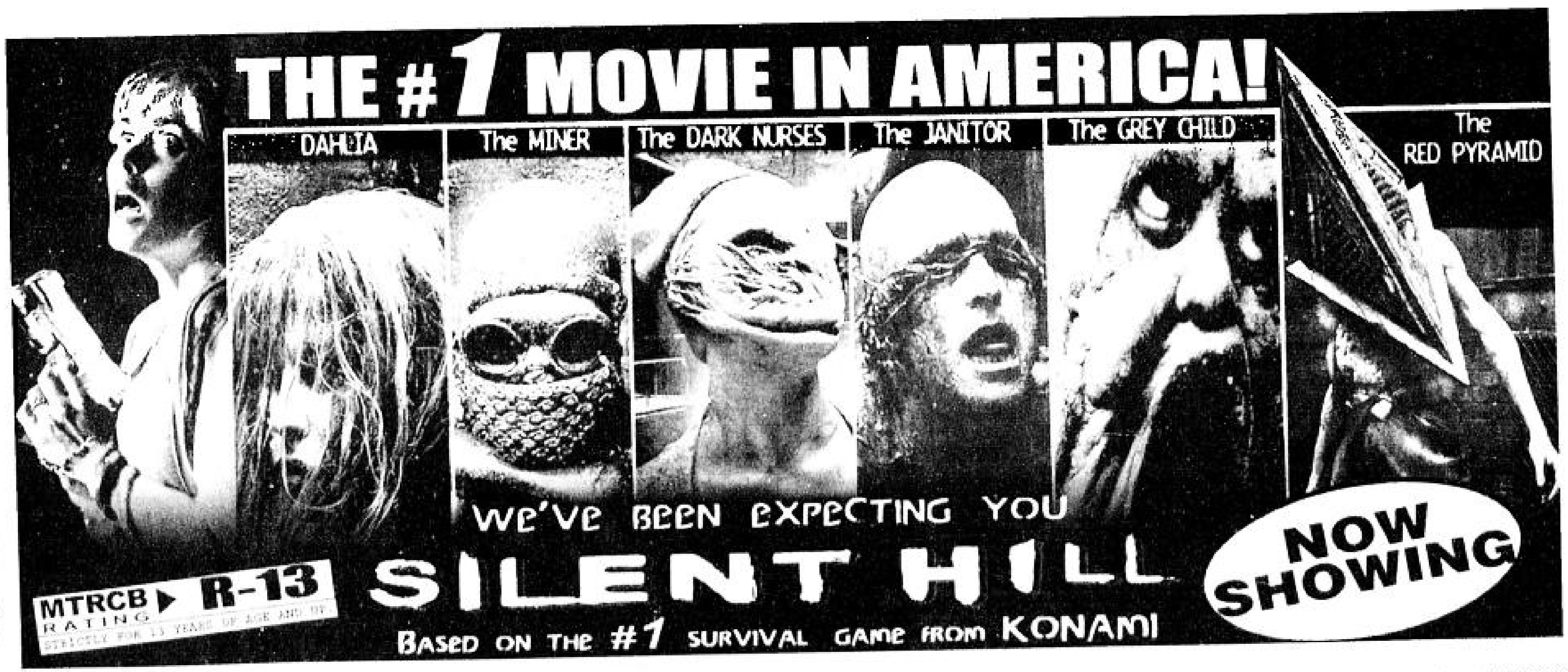

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Ex-housemates' agony and ecstasy

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

YOU GOTTA HAND IT TO BIANCA GONzalez. The girl is honest about her so-called "dishonesty."

Without hesitation she admitted, "Yup I almost fell for Zanjoe (Marudo) when we were inside Big Brother's house. I couldn't help it 'cause we were together 24/7 and I had long wanted to meet him. But when I got out and saw my boyfriend Lino (Cayetano) I knew in my heart it's really [Lino that] I love. I broke down and cried. I'm lucky he accepted my apology right away."

She's determined to make things work out between Lino and herself, so she's keeping her distance from Zanjoe for now. "Even if I'm offered a movie or a show with Zanjoe, I'll turn it down. I owe it to Lino. I don't want to give him reason to doubt me anymore," she stressed. Ain't love lovelier the second time around and when you're second to none?

I bumped into Cass Ponti and teased her, "You're being linked to Uma Khouny but isn't he rumored to be gay?" She rose to his defense: "He just said he was gay when he applied to be one of the hosts of [now defunct] 'OUT!' 'cause he really wanted to be part of the show. But believe me, Uma is straight."

Now how can Uma retract what he said to prove that his masculinity was intact? Funny that, to be "in," he pretended to "come out."

Is Sam Milby's hit song "Close To You" a rip-off of The Wannadies' "You and Me Song" (a cut in the soundtrack of "Romeo & Juliet")? Could it be another case of plagiarism or pure coincidence? Does Sam seem to be saying lend me your ear and also lend me your song?

A concerned reader (taj_mhal720@yahoo.com) e-mailed me to clarify that Nene Tamayo and Rico Robles have been friends even before they joined "Pinoy Big Brother," and so there's nothing romantic between them even if they are often seen together lately. The demarcation line between friendship and love is always a tricky thing especially when it's magnified on TV. Affections shown on screen may appear to be deeper than they really are.

John Pratts had a sweet surprise for Say Alonzo in Tagaytay. Say was misty-eyed. My spy still doesn't want to divulge the details. Suffice it to say that it was a scene straight out of a romantic movie. But there were no lights and camera. Only action. Actions speak louder than scripts.

Alfred Vargas is excited about his coffee table book called "W" (for Wet, Wild and Walker) which will be launched mid-May. It features sexy photographs of him taken by Ronnie Salvacion (produced by Walker underwear and X-ray mag).

"I'm proud of the project. It was shot in the exotic beaches of Dumaguete " Alfred beams. I ribbed him, "Exotic background to match your erotic poses?" He chuckled and said that he would rather not pinpoint which his fave shot is. "I want to keep it a mystery. I leave it to the public to guess." He adds, "As a true scorpion, passion runs through my veins and that's captured in every photo in the book."

For him, it's wit and charm that makes a woman sexy. Alfred singles out Angel Locsin as the sexiest woman in his eyes. When his coffee table book comes out, for sure it will be hotter than all the coffee in town. Imagine Alfred in all his naked glory asking, "Coffee or me?"

CASS Ponti

BIANCA Gonzalez

SAM Milby

UMA Khouny

CloseUp to Fame

A new batch of 24 hopefuls are a step closer to reaching their dreams, as "CloseUp to Fame 2: The Search for the Next CloseUp Couple" starts its second season (Saturdays after "Wowowee!").

This season offers new adventures for the "Fame Seekers." Archie Alemania, Meryll Soriano, Nikki Valdez and Rafael Rosell will guide the finalists in their quest to be the next CloseUp star. Hosting the show are Bianca Gonzalez and Heart Evangelista. Direk Joey Reyes and Dina Bonnevie are the resident judges. There will be a guest celebrity judge every week.

Jazz seminar

Ryan Cayabyab The Music Studio will hold a seminar on vocal improvisation ("A Jazzy Kind of Feeling") on Saturday, May 6, 1 to 5 p.m., at T-1B Sunvar Plaza, Pasay Road Makati.

The seminar will teach amateur singers how to develop their style, instead of being copycats of established performers.

Lecturers are vocal stylist Annie Nepomuceno and Sandra Lim-Viray, president of the Phlippine Jazz Society.

Nepomuceno received Best Vocal Arranger honors from the Katha and Awit awards for her *a capella* arrangements. Viray has performed before jazz audiences here and abroad. Peers call her "Manila's Jazz Diva." For details call 844-3330, 843-8040 or (0917) 9096484.

(E-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com.)

SAY Alonzo

JOHN Prats

BIANCA with Lino Cayetano, inset

ZANJOE Marudo

'Grey's Anatomy,' a new medical drama, has a lot of heart

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

THERE ARE SO MANY MEDICAL drama shows on TV that there doesn't seem to be any room in viewers' priorities for another one. And yet, "Grey's Anatomy" has quickly made a name for itself not just as the newest but also as one of the best "hospital" shows currently on the tube.

The program started airing on Star World only last April 5, but it's already attained "should-see" status in our home.

The show is about a group of first-year surgical interns at a large hospital, and its plus points include unusual medical cases, emotional insights into the human consequences of illness and accidents, and the interns' textured and sometimes even kinky personal lives.

The young interns are literally put through the medical wringer as their supervisors force them to go on duty for 48 hours straight. Is there method to their seemingly cruel madness? There is: They're separating the chaff from the grain, the boys from the men, the callow girls from the determined women, to make sure that only the very best survive.

Why are they so harsh? There are huge egos involved, of course, but the more objective point is that doctors and surgeons contend all the time with issues of life and death, so they have to be very good at their jobs.

Last Wednesday at 9 p.m., "Grey's Anatomy" whipped up an unusually eventful episode that touched on a dazzling number of medical cases and issues:

In a seeming accident, seven nails are pound into a worker's skull. Miraculously, he survives the ordeal—only to discover the presence of a huge tumor in his brain. If all of it is removed, he can have only five good years of life left—but his wife opts for the operation, because those "few" years could be made to last a lifetime for her.

A man with prostate cancer fights for a partial excision, so that he can retain some erectile function. His doctors overrule him, but the show's title character, Dr. Meredith Grey, fights for him to retain his physical, and more importantly, psychological manhood.

An old nurse is too far gone to be saved, but another intern strives to keep her alive, refusing to take the "easy" way out.

These and other side stories are told pretty much on the run, but the production's strong sense of focus and its cast's luminous and felt performances enable viewers to keep track of the stories as they serially unfold.

In time, it becomes clear that these seemingly unrelated cases are varied expressions of the same theme: The importance of making choices, so that you don't merely react to life's body blows, you make the life you want to live, instead.

Of course, there are some medical problems that severely limit one's choices, but even when things seem to be at their worst, the human will can still discover a small area, or arena, in which it can assert itself.

It is this hard-edged but ultimately optimistic view of life—and death—that makes "Grey's Anatomy" such an upbeat viewing treat for the show's new cadres of fans. Catch it next Wednesday, why don't you?

ELLFN Pompeo and Sandra Oh in "Grey's Anatomy"

Feedback

From Jose Mari C Maycacayan: "Your column makes my day complete and memorable. Your views are needed by electronic media practitioners. We should unite to improve the quality of Filipino films and TV program. Television influences kids, adolescents, adults, senior citizens—everybody. TV should educate, inform, entertain and inspire people.

"In these challenging times, we need positive and relevant TV shows. I would like to cite: "Travel Time" (23), "Payong Kapatid" (2), "Kumusta Kabayan" (ANC), "Island Flavors" (5), "Ang Pinaka" (11), "My Favorite Show" (ANC), "Wow" (9), "Gameplan" (23), "At your service star power" (11), "Magpakailanman" (7), "It's my life" (ANC), "Quizon Avenue" (2), "Love to love" (7), "Talk Metro" (ANC) and "Liga ng Kababaihan" (11).

"We should support these programs—they give positive energy, and make us effective and better individuals.

"The effect of responsible programming is vital to our country's progress. You make a difference through your exceptional critical thinking and on-target writing. We Filipinos are talented enough to help create the Golden Age of Television. We can make TV a good companion in our lives!"

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Flaminiano told INQUIRER Entertainment after the press con that Pacquiao's talent fee as an actor has likewise rocketed.

For his last film, "Lisensyadong Kamao," produced by Violet Films, the boxer told INQUIRER earlier, he received P650,000.

"Some producers will now find his talent fee very stiff," Flaminiano said. "It runs in the millions. But I went on and signed him—even if the contract stipulates that I will make the movies whether he wins or loses his next fight. I believe he will win. And even if he loses, I believe that he will continue to be idolized by millions of Filipinos."

Jericho Rosales plays Pacquiao in Flaminiano's movie. After the press con, Pacquiao joined the actor for a photo shoot.

"I had to have my hair straightened for the part," said Jericho, who has curly hair. "It's tough keeping it straight. But I'm doing it for Manny."

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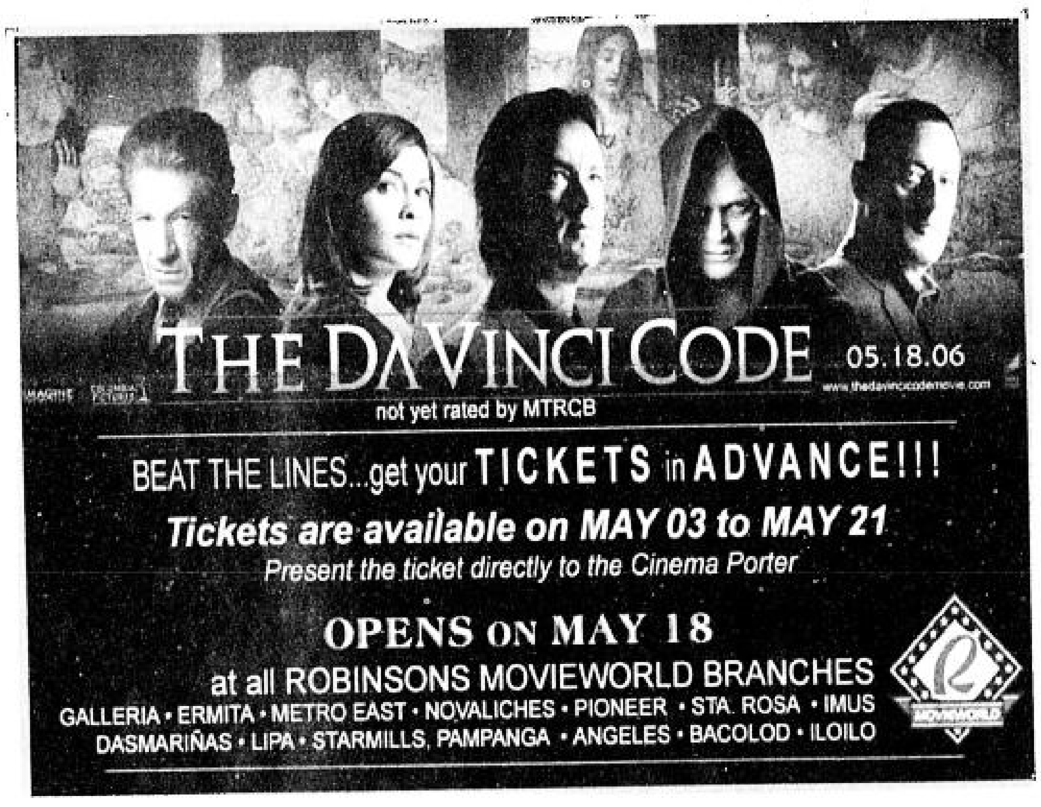

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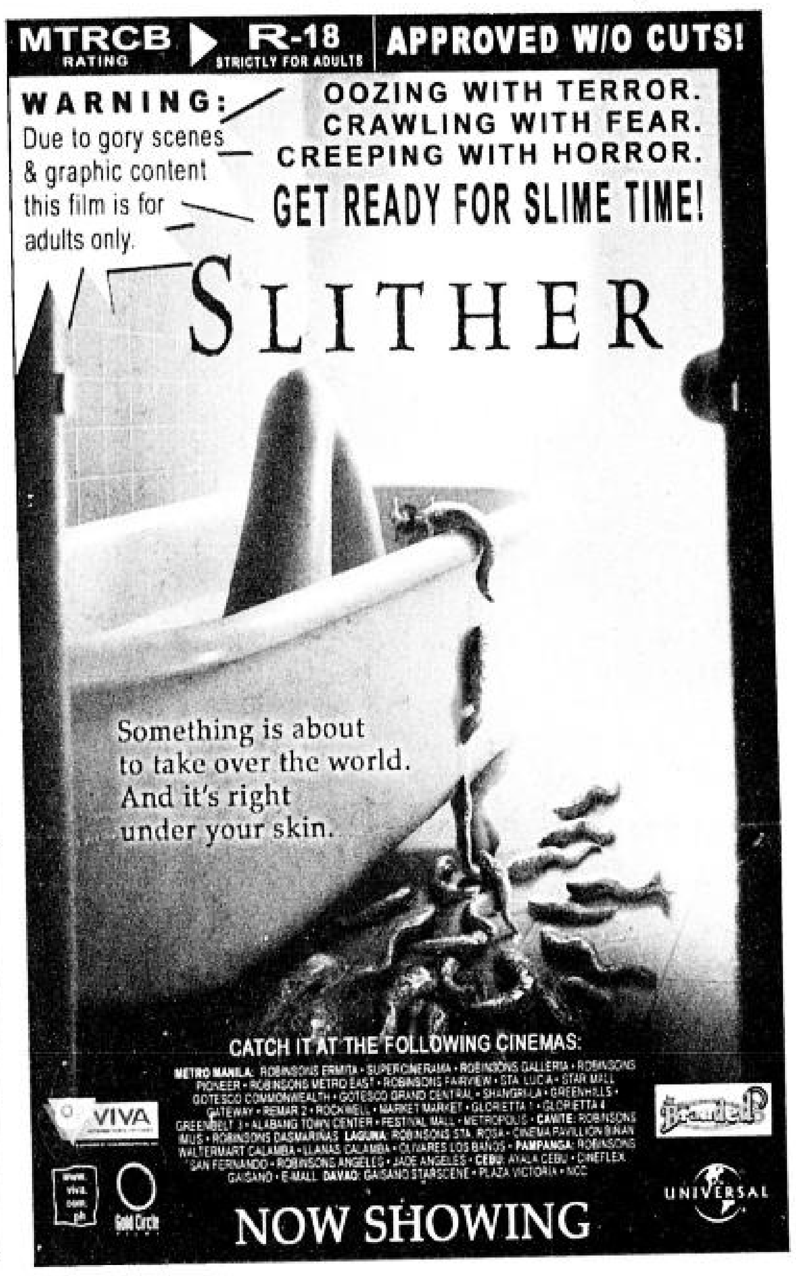

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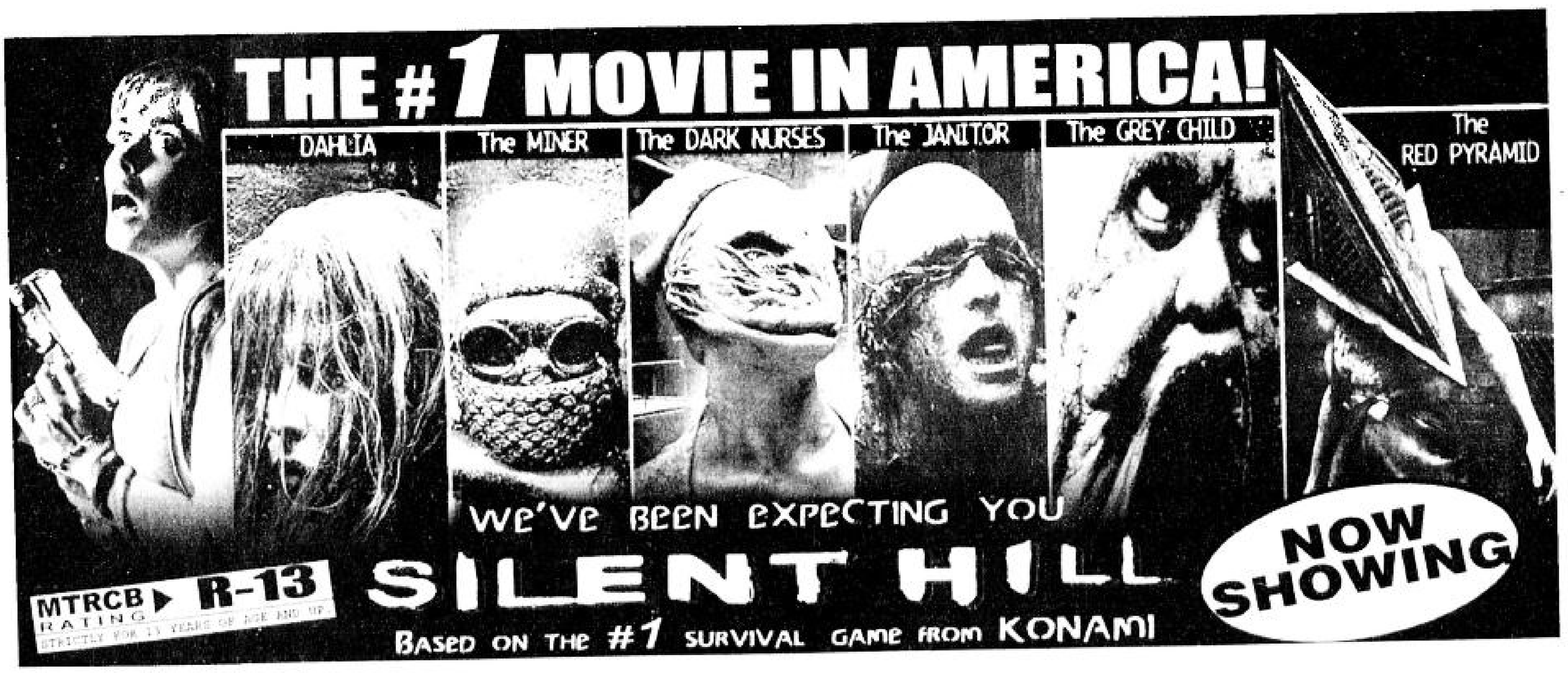

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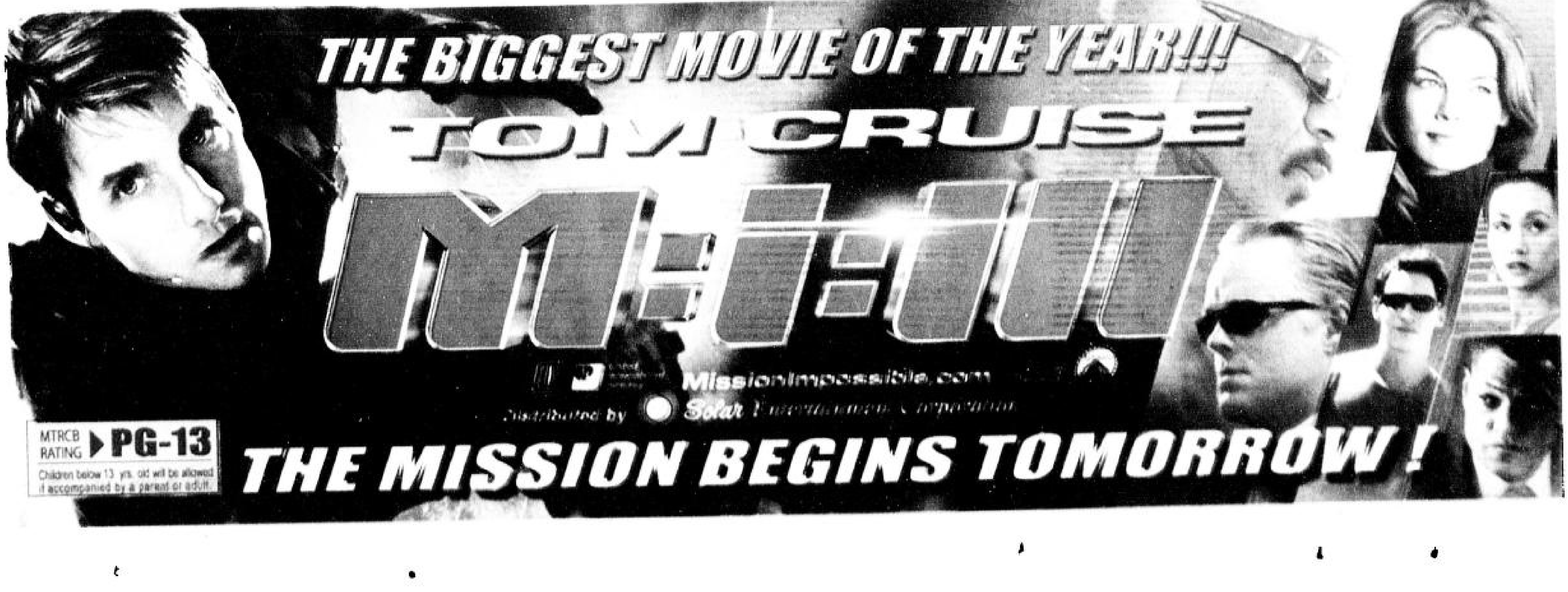

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Ex-housemates' agony and ecstasy

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

YOU GOTTA HAND IT TO BIANCA GONzalez. The girl is honest about her so-called "dishonesty."

Without hesitation she admitted, "Yup I almost fell for Zanjoe (Marudo) when we were inside Big Brother's house. I couldn't help it 'cause we were together 24/7 and I had long wanted to meet him. But when I got out and saw my boyfriend Lino (Cayetano) I knew in my heart it's really [Lino that] I love. I broke down and cried. I'm lucky he accepted my apology right away."

She's determined to make things work out between Lino and herself, so she's keeping her distance from Zanjoe for now. "Even if I'm offered a movie or a show with Zanjoe, I'll turn it down. I owe it to Lino. I don't want to give him reason to doubt me anymore," she stressed. Ain't love lovelier the second time around and when you're second to none?

I bumped into Cass Ponti and teased her, "You're being linked to Uma Khouny but isn't he rumored to be gay?" She rose to his defense: "He just said he was gay when he applied to be one of the hosts of [now defunct] 'OUT!' 'cause he really wanted to be part of the show. But believe me, Uma is straight."

Now how can Uma retract what he said to prove that his masculinity was intact? Funny that, to be "in," he pretended to "come out."

Is Sam Milby's hit song "Close To You" a rip-off of The Wannadies' "You and Me Song" (a cut in the soundtrack of "Romeo & Juliet")? Could it be another case of plagiarism or pure coincidence? Does Sam seem to be saying lend me your ear and also lend me your song?

A concerned reader (taj_mhal720@yahoo.com) e-mailed me to clarify that Nene Tamayo and Rico Robles have been friends even before they joined "Pinoy Big Brother," and so there's nothing romantic between them even if they are often seen together lately. The demarcation line between friendship and love is always a tricky thing especially when it's magnified on TV. Affections shown on screen may appear to be deeper than they really are.

John Pratts had a sweet surprise for Say Alonzo in Tagaytay. Say was misty-eyed. My spy still doesn't want to divulge the details. Suffice it to say that it was a scene straight out of a romantic movie. But there were no lights and camera. Only action. Actions speak louder than scripts.

Alfred Vargas is excited about his coffee table book called "W" (for Wet, Wild and Walker) which will be launched mid-May. It features sexy photographs of him taken by Ronnie Salvacion (produced by Walker underwear and X-ray mag).

"I'm proud of the project. It was shot in the exotic beaches of Dumaguete " Alfred beams. I ribbed him, "Exotic background to match your erotic poses?" He chuckled and said that he would rather not pinpoint which his fave shot is. "I want to keep it a mystery. I leave it to the public to guess." He adds, "As a true scorpion, passion runs through my veins and that's captured in every photo in the book."

CASS Ponti

BIANCA Gonzalez

For him, it's wit and charm that makes a woman sexy. Alfred singles out Angel Locsin as the sexiest woman in his eyes. When his coffee table book comes out, for sure it will be hotter than all the coffee in town. Imagine Alfred in all his naked glory asking, "Coffee or me?"

SAM Milby

UMA Khouny

CloseUp to Fame

A new batch of 24 hopefuls are a step closer to reaching their dreams, as "CloseUp to Fame 2: The Search for the Next CloseUp Couple" starts its second season (Saturdays after "Wowowee!").

This season offers new adventures for the "Fame Seekers." Archie Alemania, Meryll Soriano, Nikki Valdez and Rafael Rosell will guide the finalists in their quest to be the next CloseUp star. Hosting the show are Bianca Gonzalez and Heart Evangelista. Direk Joey Reyes and Dina Bonnevie are the resident judges. There will be a guest celebrity judge every week.

Jazz seminar

Ryan Cayabyab The Music Studio will hold a seminar on vocal improvisation ("A Jazzy Kind of Feeling") on Saturday, May 6, 1 to 5 p.m., at T-1B Sunvar Plaza, Pasay Road Makati.

The seminar will teach amateur singers how to develop their style, instead of being copycats of established performers.

Lecturers are vocal stylist Annie Nepomuceno and Sandra Lim-Viray, president of the Phlippine Jazz Society.

Nepomuceno received Best Vocal Arranger honors from the Katha and Awit awards for her *a capella* arrangements. Viray has performed before jazz audiences here and abroad. Peers call her "Manila's Jazz Diva." For details call 844-3330, 843-8040 or (0917) 9096484.

(E-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com.)

SAY Alonzo

JOHN Prats

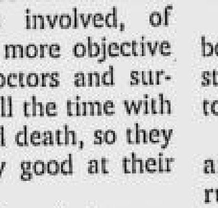
BIANCA with Lino Cayetano, inset

ZANJOE Marudo

'Grey's Anatomy,' a new medical drama, has a lot of heart

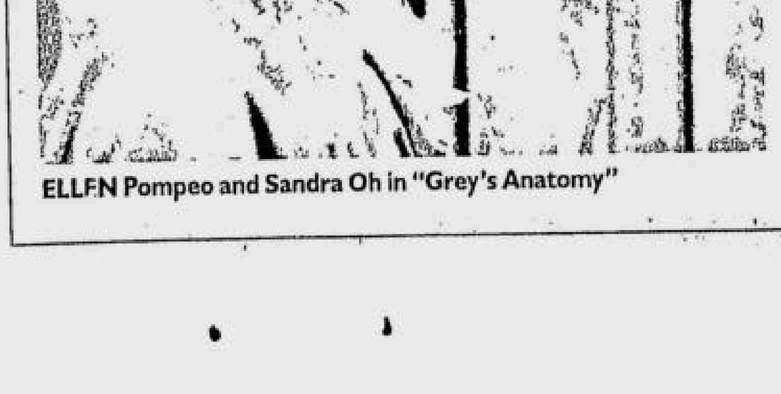
VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre



THERE ARE SO MANY MEDICAL drama shows on TV that there doesn't seem to be any room in viewers' priorities for another one. And yet, "Grey's Anatomy" has quickly made a name for itself not just as the newest but also as one of the best "hospital" shows currently on the tube.

The program started airing on Star World only last April 5, but it's already attained "should-see" status in our home.



ELLEN Pompeo and Sandra Oh in "Grey's Anatomy"

The show is about a group of first-year surgical interns at a large hospital, and its plus points include unusual medical cases, emotional insights into the human consequences of illness and accidents, and the interns' textured and sometimes even kinky personal lives.

The young interns are literally put through the medical wringer as their supervisors force them to go on duty for 48 hours straight. Is there method to their seemingly cruel madness? There is: They're separating the chaff from the grain, the boys from the men, the callow girls from the determined women, to make sure that only the very best survive.

Why are they so harsh? There are huge egos involved, of course, but the more objective point is that doctors and surgeons contend all the time with issues of life and death, so they have to be very good at their jobs.

Last Wednesday at 9 p.m., "Grey's Anatomy" whipped up an unusually eventful episode that touched on a dazzling number of medical cases and issues:

In a seeming accident, seven nails are pound into a worker's skull. Miraculously, he survives the ordeal—only to discover the presence of a huge tumor in his brain. If all of it is removed, he can have only five good years of life left—but his wife opts for the operation, because those "few" years could be made to last a lifetime for her.

A man with prostate cancer fights for a partial excision, so that he can retain some erectile function. His doctors overrule him, but the show's title character, Dr. Meredith Grey, fights for him to retain his physical, and more importantly, psychological manhood.

An old nurse is too far gone to be saved, but another intern strives to keep her alive, refusing to take the "easy" way out.

These and other side stories are told pretty much on the run, but the production's strong sense of focus and its cast's luminous and felt performances enable viewers to keep track of the stories as they serially unfold.

In time, it becomes clear that these seemingly unrelated cases are varied expressions of the same theme: The importance of making choices, so that you don't merely react to life's body blows, you make the life you want to live, instead.

Of course, there are some medical problems that severely limit one's choices, but even when things seem to be at their worst, the human will can still discover a small area, or arena, in which it can assert itself.

It is this hard-edged but ultimately optimistic view of life—and death—that makes "Grey's Anatomy" such an upbeat viewing treat for the show's new cadres of fans. Catch it next Wednesday, why don't you?

Feedback

From Jose Mari C Maycacayan: "Your column makes my day complete and memorable. Your views are needed by electronic media practitioners. We should unite to improve the quality of Filipino films and TV program. Television influences kids, adolescents, adults, senior citizens—everybody. TV should educate, inform, entertain and inspire people.

"In these challenging times, we need positive and relevant TV shows. I would like to cite: "Travel Time" (23), "Payong Kapatid" (2), "Kumusta Kabayan" (ANC), "Island Flavors" (5), "Ang Pinaka" (11), "My Favorite Show" (ANC), "Wow" (9), "Gameplan" (23), "At your service star power" (11), "Magpakailanman" (7), "It's my life" (ANC), "Quizon Avenue" (2), "Love to love" (7), "Talk Metro" (ANC) and "Liga ng Kababaihan" (11).

"We should support these programs—they give positive energy, and make us effective and better individuals.

"The effect of responsible programming is vital to our country's progress. You make a difference through your exceptional critical thinking and on-target writing. We Filipinos are talented enough to help create the Golden Age of Television. We can make TV a good companion in our lives!"

ROUNDUP

Bird flu

WASHINGTON—Bodies piling up so quickly it takes dump trucks to haul them away. Barbed wire to keep whole neighborhoods quarantined. It's Hollywood's version of bird flu, a blur of fact and fiction that some scientists say could confuse the public.

"Fatal Contact: Bird Flu in America," an ABC made-for-television movie, airs May 9. Scientists fear the bird flu virus could evolve so it could be passed from human to human, sparking a global pandemic.

The two-hour movie plays up that notion to the fullest, with a running ticker that tallies tens of millions of victims worldwide.

The producers of the movie bill their work as a "thinking man's disaster film."

"We call this a plausible, worst-case scenario. This could actually happen. It may not be this bad but it could be this bad. We should be as prepared as we should be," said Diana Kerew, one of the movie's executive producers. *AP*

Boycott

ROME—A VATICAN official has called for a boycott of the upcoming "The Da Vinci Code" film, saying it contained "slanderous" offenses against Christianity that would provoke a worldwide revolt had they been directed against Islam or the Holocaust, an Italian news agency reported.

Monsignor Angelo Amato—Pope Benedict XVI's former No. 2 when Benedict was head of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith—made the comments in a speech at the Pontifical Holy Cross University, which is run by the conservative Catholic movement Opus Dei, the ANSA news agency reported.

The agency quoted Amato as saying the best-selling novel by Dan Brown, was full of "offenses, slander, historical and theological errors concerning Jesus, the Gospel and the Church." *AP*

Dylan rocks

NEW ORLEANS—Bob Dylan treated thousands of sunbaked fans to a rocking set of classics like "All Along the Watchtower" and "Like a Rolling Stone" to open New Orleans' first post-Katrina music festival, one the city hopes will kick-start

ROUNDUP/ A2-4

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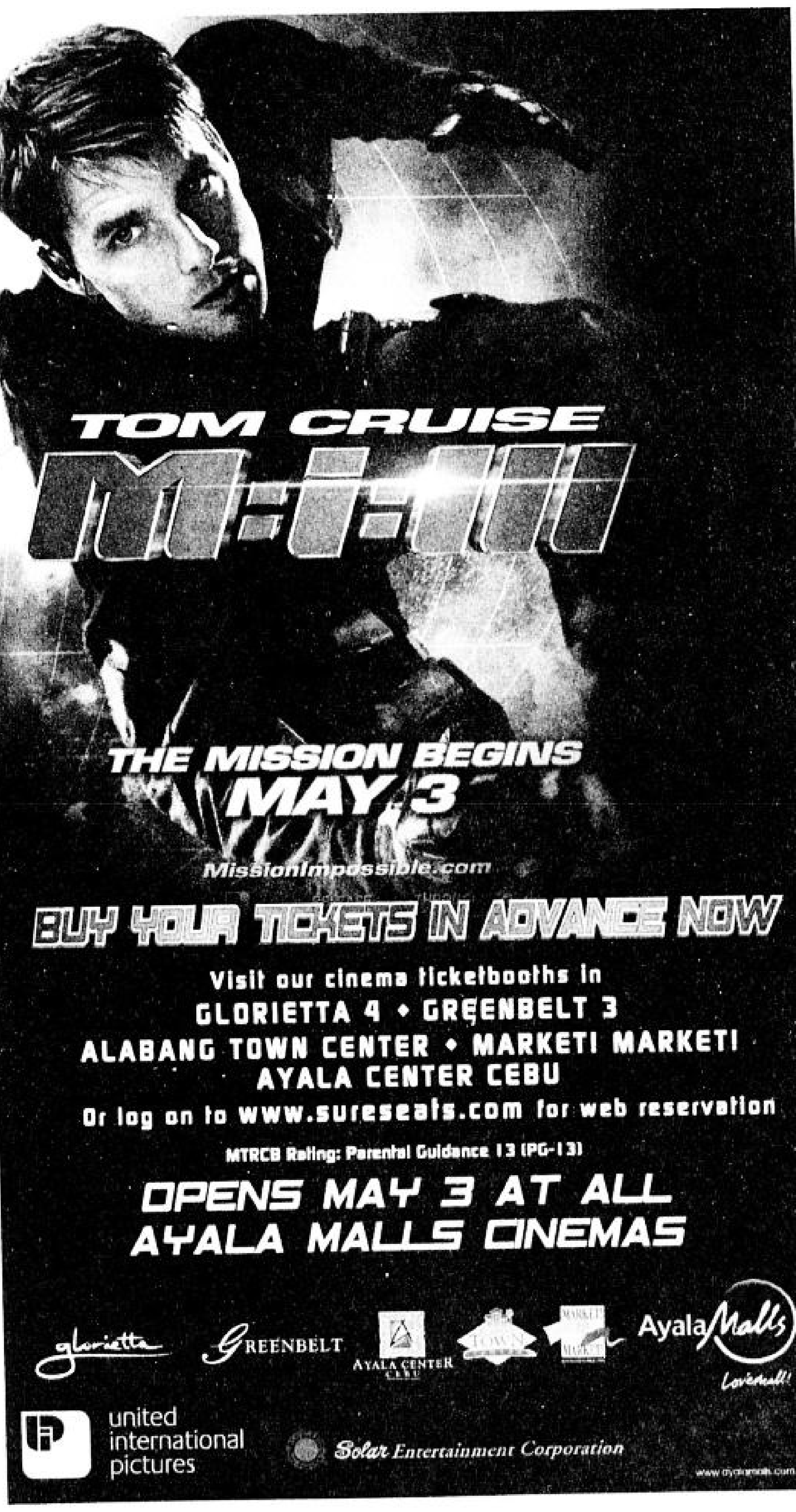
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5 SLITHER
1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00

6 THE WILD
1:30 3:35 5:40 7:45 9:50

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12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

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12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

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4 SILENT HILL
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5 THE SENTINEL
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6 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
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CINEMA 2
THE WILD

SM MEGACINEMA

SENTINEL
THE WILD
SILENT HILL
RESERVED
THE WILD
SILENT HILL
SUBMERGED
ICE AGE 2
PAMAHIIN
D LUCKY ONES
EIGHT BELOW
WHEN A STRANGER CALLS

SM CITY NORTH EDSA

SENTINEL
WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
PAMAHIIN
SILENT HILL
SUBMERGED
EIGHT BELOW
D LUCKY ONES
THE WILD

SM CITY DASMARINAS

PAMAHIIN
THE WILD
SENTINEL
WHEN A STRANGER CALLS

SM CITY FAIRVIEW

EIGHT BELOW
MOMENTS OF LOVE
D LUCKY ONES
SILENT HILL
PAMAHIIN
WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
SENTINEL
THE WILD
ICE AGE 2
TRISTAN & ISOLDE
SUBMERGED
VENOM

SM CITY STA. MESA

SILENT HILL
THE WILD
SENTINEL
PAMAHIIN
WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
TRISTAN & ISOLDE
EIGHT BELOWD
SUBMERGED
D LUCKY ONES
ICE AGE 2

SM CITY BICUTAN

SENTINEL
THE WILD
WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
SILENT HILL

SM CITY SAN LAZARO

SILENT HILL
WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
THE WILD
SENTINEL
D LUCKY ONES
PAMAHIIN

SM CITY MANILA

WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
SUBMERGED
SILENT HILL
EIGHT BELOW
THE WILD
SENTINEL
PAMAHIIN
ICE AGE 2
MOMENTS OF LOVE
TRISTAN & ISOLDE
D LUCKY ONES
SILENT HILL

SM CITY SOUTHMALL

SILENT HILL
THE WILD
SILENT HILL
SENTINEL
ICE AGE 2
WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
D LUCKY ONES
PAMAHIIN
SUBMERGED

SM SUPERCENTER VALENZUELA

SILENT HILL
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THE WILD
PAMAHIIN

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PAMAHIIN
WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
PAMAHIIN
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SENTINEL
THE WILD
D LUCKY ONES
BANDIDAS
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BANDIDAS
JUST FRIENDS
D LUCKY ONES

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SENTINEL
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THE WILD
JUST FRIENDS
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VISAYAS MINDANAO

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THE WILD

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THE WILD
WHEN A STRANGER CALLS

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ROUNDUP

From page A2-3

BOB Dylan AP

its recovery.

The New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival started on Friday with a gravel-voiced Dylan leading his sextet on organ through reworked versions of the tunes that defined his early career.

"With Dylan, and to have this happen again means everything to us," Julie Becker, a native New Orleanian, said while waiting for an encore from the folk-rock pioneer and his band in the blazing afternoon sun. *Reuters*

Downloads

NEW YORK—ROCK bands Cheap Trick and The Allman Brothers Band are suing Sony Music, claiming they are being shortchanged on royalties for songs downloaded legally over the Internet.

The suit, filed at a federal court in Manhattan, claims Sony has failed to live up to a contract requiring that it pay its musicians half of the net revenue it receives from licensing songs to download services like iTunes and Napster. *AP*

Al the 13th

LOS ANGELES—"Ocean's Thirteen" just got some added depth with the addition of Al Pacino to the star-studded cast, Daily Variety reported Tuesday.

In the third installment of the caper films about charming rogue Danny Ocean (played by George Clooney), Pacino—who turned 66 on Tuesday—will join the eminent ensemble alongside Brad Pitt, Matt Damon, Andy Garcia and Don Cheadle.

Clooney, who won best supporting actor honors at this year's Oscars ceremony for "Syriana," will coproduce the Warner Brothers film, slated for release in summer 2007. *AFP*

Yes, she says

LOS ANGELES—With Rosie O'Donnell as its newest co-host, talk show "The View" brings a six-time Daytime Emmy winner onto a cast that has made a joke out of its inability to win an Emmy.

"The View" creator Barbara Walters confirmed Friday that O'Donnell will join her show in September, replacing the "Today" show-bound Meredith Vieira. Walters made the announcement from the stage of the Daytime Emmy awards.

"We were amazed when she said yes," Walters said.

It wasn't quite the secret that Walters wanted, since word of O'Donnell's selection leaked out on Thursday. O'Donnell made a joking reference to that, noting she had read about her and Walters on the Internet.

About her new job, she joked, "it was either that or the celebrity fit club." *AP*

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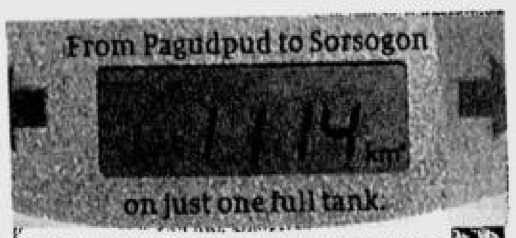

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Trade gap expected to hit $10B

But growth in OFW remittances seen to prop up BOP this year

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE COUNTRY'S TRADE DEFICIT IS SEEN TO WIDEN this year to about $10 billion from last year's $9 billion on increased shipment of industrial inputs, and on higher costs of oil imports, according to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

The BSP data indicated that exports would hit $47.09 billion this year, or 8 percent more than last year, while imports would rise to $57.33 billion from $52.6 billion.

But BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo said the higher merchandise trade deficit expected this year would be offset by increases in other external accounts.

A sustained growth in remittances from overseas Filipino workers and improved inflows of foreign investments are seen to support the country's balance of payments.

Based on the BSP's outlook on the country's BOP, export earnings will grow by 8 percent this year and 11 percent next year, while the import bill will likewise rise by 9 percent and 12 percent, respectively.

"The trade balance will deteriorate because imports will be growing ... (but) most of the imports will come in the form of raw materials, intermediate products and capital goods, which will be used to expand exports," Guinigundo said, noting that he expects better export figures next year.

Last year, the country's export earnings hit $43.6 billion, while import costs reached $52.6 billion.

Even as local exporters are complaining that the strong peso has been hurting their businesses, the BSP is optimistic

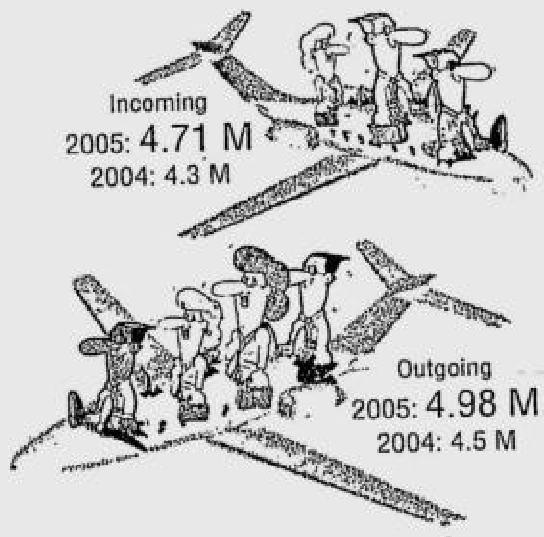
TRADE/ B2

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

International passenger traffic up in 2005

The total number of passengers flying in and out of the country rose by 10.31 percent to 9.69 million in 2005 from 8.78 million in 2004.



Source: Civil Aeronautics Board
Kate Pedroso PDI Research

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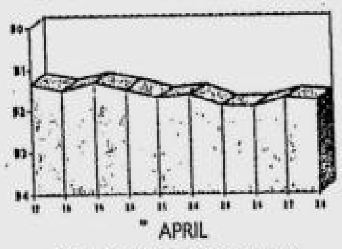

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As of 5 p.m., April 28, 2006

GOLD: $638.30-638.80
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Trading resumes today

TRADING AT THE MARKET TOOK A BREATHER yesterday on account of Labor Day. Share prices last Friday closed 0.48 percent lower after recent gains took the market to near

TRADING/ B4

WHAT'S INSIDE

BREAKTIME
Like a hoot potato /B2

Napocor says new power generation capacity needed /B5

Annual review of tax incentives sought /B8

BIR's excise tax collection up 5.2% to ₱14.2B in Q1

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT'S EXCISE TAX collection has registered a year-on-year growth of 5.2 percent to P14.2 billion in the first quarter, as the effects of last year's increase in "sin" tax rates are starting to be felt this year, according to fiscal authorities.

In the first quarter of last year, the Bureau of Internal Revenue collected P13.5 billion in excise taxes, government data showed.

Excise tax is imposed on petroleum, automobiles and so-called sin products, like cigarettes and alcoholic beverages.

Of the P14.2 billion collected in the first quarter, cigarettes accounted for the biggest share with P6.5 billion, which reflected a 67-percent increment from the P3.9 billion collected last year.

Officials attributed the increase in the collection of excise tax on cigarettes to the Sin Tax Law, which took effect early last year. The law raised each of the tax rates imposed on several price classifications of cigarettes and alcohol.

Although the BIR was able to increase its excise tax collection last year, actual growth was minimal, failing even to meet the target of raising P15 billion in incremental revenues for 2005.

The BIR said this was due to the cigarette firms, which tried to avoid paying higher taxes by advancing production long before the law took effect.

But the BIR said the revenue impact of the higher excise tax rates on cigarettes would be felt this year.

Alcohol accounted for the second-biggest contribution of P4.4 billion in the BIR's excise tax collection for the first quarter. The figure however reflected a

BIR'S/ B2

With a lot of help from
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The economic crisis in 1998 was a big hurdle in the growth of her business. Expansion was put to a halt. But in 2002, Mrs. San Jose finally decided to avail of a BPI Family Savings Bank Grow Your SME Business Loan.

"To my surprise, it offered affordable rates and easy terms. It gave me back my confidence to grow my business", Mrs. San Jose said. With the loan granted to her, she was able to finally expand Chippens to a 250-seater buffet restaurant in Roxas Ave., Davao.

"Laking tulong ng BPI Family Savings Bank sa Chippens", Mrs. San Jose said, as she proudly scanned her huge restaurant teeming with satisfied customers.

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Like a hoot potato

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

RANKED NINTH LARGEST IN ASSETS, Banco de Oro continues to make noises in media about its merger proposal to Equitable PCI Bank, the third largest.

Just what makes BDO think that the proposal will still fly at present, is the topic of jokes in banking and the stock market.

As everybody already knows, BDO's merger proposal (as designed by Henry Sy's daughter Tessie Sy-Coson, with able assistance perhaps from BDO president Nestor Tan) is nothing but a way for the SM group to take over EPCIB without the group spending another centavo.

The SM group simply has to coerce the other major stockholders of EPCIB to support the merger scheme, even if the stockholders happens to be everybody's pension funds, namely the SSS and the GSIS.

To force the SSS and the GSIS into the merger, the SM group must continue to use political connections.

At present, however, this cute administration continues to struggle.

Everybody knows that an issue like the EPCIB merger is the last thing that Gloriaetta needs. The GSIS and the SSS invested P20 billion in EPCIB. They may have a hard time recovering the investment if the SM group will have its way with the merger.

That is something the tens of millions of members of the SSS and the GSIS may rise up against. To this cute administration, therefore, the SM group's proposal is now a political risk, something that it can just drop like a hot potato.

* * *

It's not as if the same SM group has a glowing track record with the working class, like the SSS and GSIS members.

In its department stores, the SM group has become famous for using "contractual labor," replacing workers every six months—a practice known to avoid the payment of benefits to workers.

Also, we hear complaints from SM mall tenants, who claim that they are forced to lease stores in new malls outside Metro Manila whether they like to or not.

Everybody also knows that SM department stores, which anchor all SM malls, used to carry mainly local goods, so much so that the SM stores were the heaven for small and medium scale manufacturers of consumer goods like garments.

But those stores are now selling mostly imported items. The local manufacturers of course closed down.

Really, the SM group is not exactly known for fair play or patriotism.

And this cute administration still wants to grant a big favor—i.e., sacrifice the SSS and GSIS investments in EPCIB—to the same SM group, is that it?

I mean, just how bad is that to the already terrible public image of this cute administration?

* * *

The court reset the hearing of the harassment case of the US-based Pfizer—the world's largest bully, *este*, drug company—against this cute administration.

Reason: The judge was on leave.

And so far, the court has yet to set the date for the resumption of the hearing.

The billion-peso question therefore is, can the postponement of the case affect the plan of this cute administration to lower the price of a particular medicine for hypertension as soon as possible?

You see, Pfizer holds the patent for the medicine known as Norvasc, which Pfizer sells in this poor country at P45 per 5-mg tablet.

In other countries such as India, Pfizer sells the same medicine under a different name—Amlogard—at only P6 per tablet.

That makes the drug only about 650 percent more expensive here than in other countries.

And so this cute administration wants to import the drug from India as soon as the Pfizer patent expires in June next year. The state-owned trading firm PITC has already started the process of getting permits and such.

But Pfizer went to court to stop PITC from starting the long process. By filing the case, Pfizer can expect to have at least 18 more months to sell the drug at that killer price of 650 percent higher. After all, Pfizer stands to make a profit of about P2.5 billion due to the delay.

In various websites of US-based NGOs that monitor drug companies, particularly their abuses, Pfizer has been described as "aggressive." I think that the company is heartless.

One website noted that, in the Philippines, where 95 percent of the population cannot afford the Pfizer medicine Norvasc at that exhorbitant price, Pfizer chooses the strategy to cater only to the rich.

In other words, what Pfizer is telling the majority of poor Filipinos who also need the anti-hypertension medication is this: TOUGH!

Now, based on reports from abroad, the management and the board of Pfizer are dealing with unrest among its stockholders.

Among the major issues is the huge pay for the chair and CEO, Hank McKinnell, who gets $65 million a year, plus $80-million pension upon retirement.

Reports said that stockholders are hooting against the Pfizer board for giving top potato McKinnell such a fortune of a pay.

That guy gets such a huge income of course at the expense of poor and sick people in countries like the Philippines.

I just don't know if the Pfizer executives here can sleep at night.

Trade gap in '06 expected to reach $10B

From page B1

that export growth could hit 8 percent this year against the 4 percent posted last year.

The BOP, on the other hand, is seen to sustain a surplus of about $1.6 billion, slowing down from the $2.4 billion posted last year.

Although the country's actual BOP surplus in the first three months of this year had already exceeded $2 billion, BSP has "conservatively" factored in outflows from debt payments for the rest of the year, as well as lower growth in inflows of overseas workers' remittances and foreign portfolio investments.

For instance, OFW remittances are seen to rise by only 10 percent this year from the actual growth of 25 percent last year, partly due to strict implementation of anti-money laundering measures and immigration policies around the world.

The BOP measures the foreign exchange transactions between the domestic economy and the rest of the world. Its major components are the current account and the capital and financial account.

The current account records trade in goods and services, as well as cash transfers sent by migrant workers. Capital and financial accounts include foreign investment flows.

Any transaction which gives rise to a payment by a Philippine resident, like importation, is considered a deficit item in the BOP, while any transaction which gives rise to a receipt, like exporting or inward remittance, is a surplus item.

BIR's excise tax collection up 5.2% . . .

From page B1

4-percent decline from the P4.6 billion recorded a year earlier, defeating the purpose of increasing the excise tax rates on alcohol.

Petroleum products contributed P2.8 billion in the first quarter, which was 36.4-percent lower than the P2.8 billion collected during the same period last year.

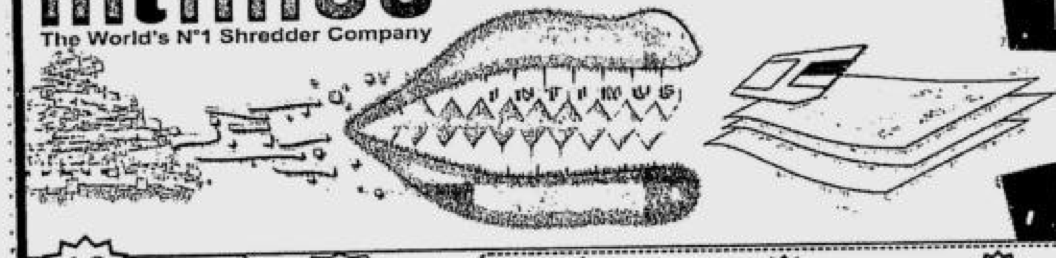
The decline was attributed to the government's decision to reduce the excise tax rates on petroleum products early this year to ease the impact of soaring oil prices in the world market.

Meanwhile, government data also showed that the BIR's value-added tax collection reached P32.3 billion in in the first quarter. This was higher than the target of P29.1 billion for the period, and the P20.5 billion collected in the fourth quarter of 2005.

The quarter-on-quarter growth in VAT collection was attributed to the Feb. 1 increase in the value-added tax rate from 10 to 12 percent. The increase was one of the provisions of the VAT Reform Law.

The VAT law, which took effect on Nov. 1 last year, also expanded the coverage of the value-added tax.

Previously exempted products that are now covered by VAT include oil and electricity, while services that used to be exempted include those rendered by doctors and lawyers.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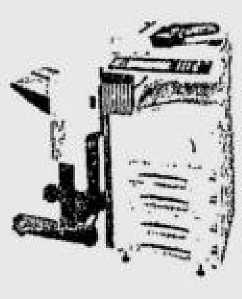

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Del Monte profit down 36% in Q1

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

DEL MONTE PACIFIC Limited, a joint venture between the Campos Group and San Miguel Corp., said its first quarter profit fell 36 percent to $3.4 million due to lower sales and higher costs and taxes.

In a financial report filed with the Stock Exchange of Singapore, Del Monte said first quarter sales dipped 3 percent to $46.7 million, from $48 million.

The company posted strong export sales to North America.

New businesses such as China-based fruit juice maker Great Lakes and Del Monte Foods India also pitched in higher revenues of $4.2 million in the first quarter from $2.4 million in the same quarter the prior year due to higher sales volume and prices.

Sales in Asia Pacific, which accounted for 62 percent of the group's total sales in the first quarter, dropped 4 percent to $28.8 million. In the Philippines, sales improved 2 percent due to a 7-percent increase in prices and a 5-percent appreciation of the peso. Volume in the Philippines declined 5 percent due to cautious trade orders in light of the expanded Value Added Tax implemented in February.

The growth in revenue, however, was not enough to offset lower sales to Europe and weak sales of nonprocessed products, the company said.

Sales in Europe, which accounted for 38 percent of total

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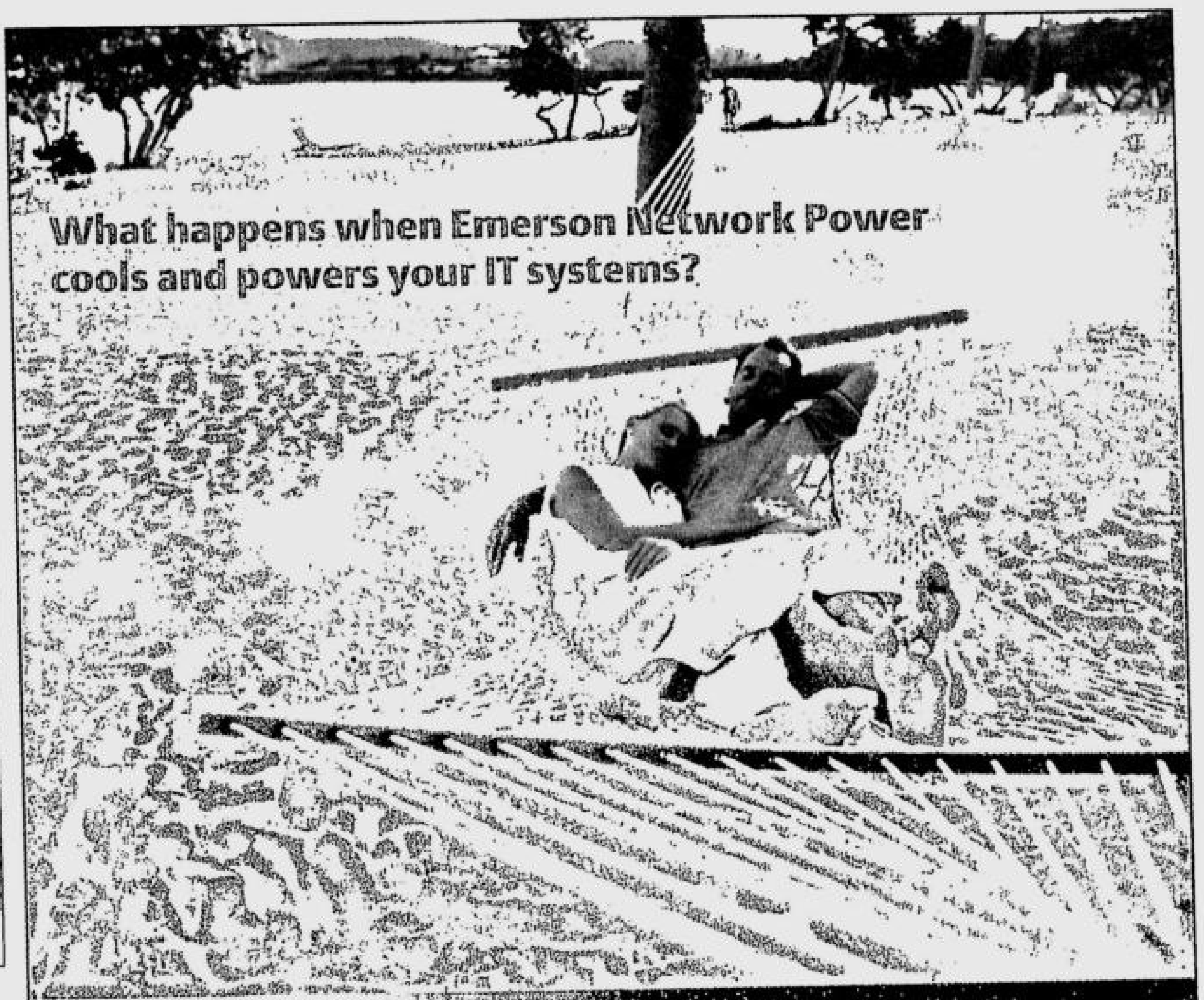
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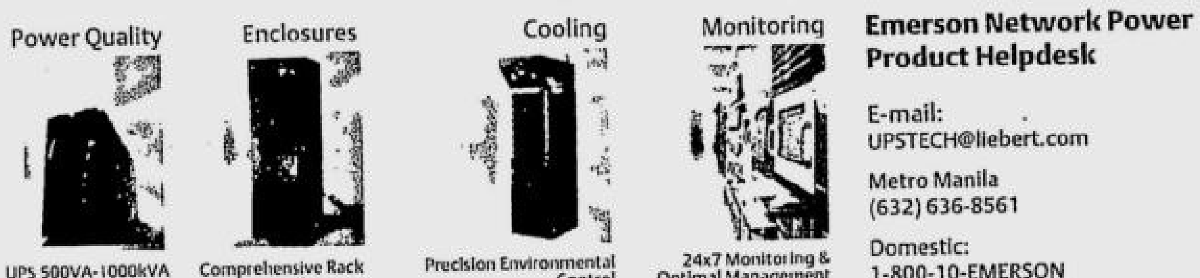

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Philex, US firm in joint venture talks

With or without partner, company to pursue new copper project

By Christine A. Gaylican

PHILEX MINING CORP. HAS RECEIVED A joint venture offer from American firm Phelps Dodge Inc., specifically for the exploration and development of the Ansagan copper prospect in Benguet province, Philex's new mining project.

Philex Mining Corp. officers led by chair and chief executive officer Walter W. Brown, in a recent briefing with market analysts, said negotiations with the prospective foreign partner were still underway.

However, Brown said Philex would proceed with the project whether or not an agreement with Phelps Dodge would be reached.

The Ansagan copper-gold prospect complements another new mining exploration project of the company, the Butan prospect, with an estimated deposit of 400,000 tons of ore with mineral grade of 5.6 grams of gold per ton.

"These new prospects are within the area of Philex's Padcal mine in Benguet, and any new ore to be recovered could be fed to our current facilities," Brown said.

On top of these, the company has also lined up other exploration projects in Mindanao. It is also undertaking the Boyungan Copper-Gold project in Zamboanga del Norte with Anglo-American Philippines Inc.

Brown said its affiliate, Philex Gold Inc., was undertaking exploration of the Lacsogon mining tenement. The project is a joint venture with FEC Resources Inc., which committed some $250 million in investments.

Another property for exploration is the Sibutad gold prospect, which has an estimated ore deposit of 19 million tons, with 1.12 grams of gold per ton. In Zamboanga del Sur, Philex has a mining concern referred to as the Sanfran project.

Brown said that with its earnings of P409 million last year, the company would be able to pursue its new exploration projects.

Trading resumes today

From page B1

seven-year highs, dealers said.

The composite index fell 10.86 points to 2,270.53 after trading between 2,266.10 and 2,283.33. Volume was 2.22 billion shares worth P1.56 billion.

The broader all-shares index retreated 0.70 points to 1,408.43. Gainers led losers 59 to 39, with 51 stocks unchanged. *AFP*

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Alabang Country Club "B" (Foreigner)	1,200,000	-
Anvaya Cove Beach and Nature Club	Please Call	-
Baguio Country Club	550,000	520,000
Calatagan Golf Club "A"	40,000	-
Calatagan Golf Club "B"	70,000	-
Camp John Hay	190,000	170,000
Canlubang	550,000	400,000
Capitol Hills	60,000	-
Cebu Country Club	1,500,000	1,350,000
Celebrity Sports Club	120,000	100,000
Club Filipino	100,000	-
Eagleridge "A"/"B"/"C"	Please Call	-
Forest Hills "A"	100,000	-
Forest Hills "B"	180,000	-
Forest Hills "C"	190,000	-
Makati Sports Club "A"	180,000	-
Makati Sports Club "B"	250,000	-
Manila Golf (Corporate)	-	12,000,000
Manila Golf (Individual)	-	10,500,000
Manila Polo	-	2,300,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	340,000	300,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	750,000	600,000
Manila Yacht Club	310,000	200,000
Mimosa (Individual)	-	180,000
Mimosa (Corporate)	-	500,000
Mt. Malarayat Gold "A"	220,000	-
Mt. Malarayat Gold "C"	350,000	-
Orchard Golf Club "A"	200,000	140,000
Orchard Golf Club "B"	-	350,000
Orchard Golf Club "C"	360,000	-
Quezon City Sports Club	170,000	140,000
Rockwell Club	Please Call	-
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FOREST HILLS B	180K	CAPITOL HILLS	60K
EAGLERIDGE A	150K	CLUB FILIPINO	90K
EAGLERIDGE B	PLS. CALL	CLUB PUNTA FUEGO	PLS. CALL
MAKATI SPORTS	180K	EAGLE RIDGE B	PLS. CALL
MANILA GOLF CORP	12.0M	MANILA GOLF IND	11.0M
MANILA POLO CLUB	PLS. CALL	MANILA GOLF CORP	11.5M
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MANILA SOUTHWOODS B	750K	MANILA SOUTHWOODS B	700K
MANILA YACHT CLUB	350K	ORCHARD A	PLS. CALL
PUNTA FUEGO	400K	ORCHARD B	PLS. CALL
QUEZON CITY SPORTS	150K	RIVIERA GOLF B	130K
ROYALE TAGAYTAY	70K	RIVIERA GOLF CLUB C	180K
SUBIC GOLF CLUB	120K	ROCKWELL CLUB	200K
TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS	700K	SPA & LODGE	400K
THE PALMS	430K	STA. ELENA A	1.0M
TOWER CLUB C	300K	STA. ELENA B	1.450M
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Camp John Hay	-	Pls. Call
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Canyon Woods	120,000	-
Capitol Hills	60,000	-
Cebu Country Club	Pls. Call	1,350,000
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Evercrest	65,000	-
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Luisita Golf	Pls. Call	300,000
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Manila Golf Individual	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
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Sherwood A/B*/C**	70,000/150,000**	80,000*
Sta. Elena Golf A/B*	1,150,000	1,100,000/1,550,000*
The Palms Country Club	500,000	-
Tagaytay Country Club	330,000	310,000
Tagaytay Highlands	500,000	-
Tagaytay Midlands	Pls. Call	600,000
The Country Club	2,000,000	-
Tower Club	150,000	-
Valley Golf	210,000	-
Valle Verde Ind.	100,000	-
Wack Wack Golf	[illegible]	6,175,000

Tel. 8504161 (0917)3287789 E-mail: info@gwclubshares.com website: www.gwclubshares.com

UNIONBANK

UnionBank Plaza, Meralco Ave. corner Onyx & Sapphire Streets, Ortigas Center, Pasig City

A full-service universal bank with 111 branches
A partnership among the Aboitiz Group, Insular Life Assurance Co. and Social Security System

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CONDITION
(Head Office and Branches)
As of March 31, 2006

ASSETS

Cash and Cash Items	P	759,841,137
Due from Bangko Sentral		2,866,710,069
Due from Other Banks		985,864,066
Interbank Loans Receivable		46,595,512,923
Trading Account Securities (Net)		4,376,557
Investments in Bonds and Other Debt Instruments (Net)		29,696,769,605
Loans, Discounts & Advances (Net)		9,697,300,082
Equity Investments (Net)		671,685,242
Bank Premises, Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment (Net)		3,453,994,990
Other Assets (Net)		11,300,727,860
Property Owned/Acquired		5,841,397,373
Others		5,459,330,487
TOTAL ASSETS	P	106,032,362,531

LIABILITIES

Demand Deposits	P	14,847,785,002
Savings Deposits		14,211,682,599
Time Deposits		29,377,533,672
Due to Bangko Sentral		44,769,728
Due to Banks		313,028
Outstanding Checks/Payment Orders		1,967,378,248
Bills Payable		15,749,520,182
BSP Rediscounts/Special Programs		19,045,668
Interbank Borrowings		15,002,841,926
Others		727,632,588
Unearned Income and Other Deferred Credits		700,161,561
Other Liabilities		10,885,336,673
TOTAL LIABILITIES	P	87,784,480,143

CAPITAL ACCOUNTS

Capital Stock	P	7,087,057,923
Surplus		11,094,152,344
Surplus Reserves		66,672,121
TOTAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	P	18,247,882,388
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	P	106,032,362,531

CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS

Unused Commercial Letters of Credit	P	341,525,214
Bills for Collection		67,985,392
Spot/Future Exchange Sold		9,250,536,156
Spot/Future Exchange Brought		4,354,201,798
Assets Held Under Trust and Investment Management Agreements		9,217,963,866
Invested in		3,126,823,402
Government Securities		
Other Securities, Debt Instruments And Shares of Stock		271,727,022
Loans and Discounts		5,811,874,785
Other Assets		7,538,657
Accountabilities		8,321,335,831
Trust & Other Fiduciary		529,293,635
Common Trust Funds		367,334,400
Investment/Fund Management		2,778,292,806
Other Contingent Accounts		
TOTAL CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS	P	26,010,505,232

Other Information

1. Deposits of		
a Government	P	6,194,839,632
b Banks		235,330,043
c Trust Department		4,524,774,564
2 Compliance with Magna Carta law		
a Prescribed Ratio of Compliance for 6% (Small Enterprises)		6.90%
a Prescribed Ratio of Compliance for 2% (Medium Enterprises)		3.90%
3 Amount of Non Performing Loans		4,138,417,301
4. Ratio of Non Performing Loans to Total Loan Portfolio		6.94%
5 Amount of Classified Loans and Other Risk Assets		5,928,914,202
6 General Provision for Loan Losses		354,564,864
7 Specific Provision for Loan Losses		3,012,043,339
8 Return on equity (ROE)		14.53%
9 Amount of DOSRI Loans/Advances		916,302,994
10 Ratio of DOSRI Loans/Advances to Total Loan Portfolio		1.54%
11 Amount of Past Due DOSRI Loans/Advances		
12 Ratio of Past Due DOSRI Loans/Advances to Total Loan Portfolio		

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
MAKATI CITY) S.S.

We, Ana D. Lirio and Guia C. Lim of the above-mentioned bank do solemnly swear that all matters set forth in the above statement of condition are true and correct to the best of our knowledge and belief.

ANA D. LIRIO
First Vice President

GUIA C. LIM
Executive Vice President

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 24th day of April, 2006, affiants exhibiting to me their Community Tax No. 18924258 issued at Muntinlupa on February 13, 2006 and Community Tax No 16917688 issued at Manila on February 27, 2006, respectively.

Doc No. 391
Page No. 80
Book No. XXII
Series of 2006

BERNARDO V. CABRAL
NOTARY PUBLIC UNTIL DEC. 31, 2007
PTR NO. 9439540C 01.06.05 Makati
IBP O.R. No. 632068 01.05.06 Makati
Roll of Attorney No. 34625
MAKATI CITY

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CONDITION
(Bank and its Subsidiaries and Affiliates)
As of March 31, 2006

ASSETS

Cash and Cash Items	P	759,842,337
Due from Bangko Sentral		2,866,710,069
Due from Other Banks		985,864,066
Interbank Loans Receivable		46,595,512,923
Trading Account Securities (Net)		4,643,959
Investments in Bonds and Other Debt Instruments (Net)		29,696,269,605
Loans, Discounts & Advances (Net)		9,697,380,082
Equity Investments (Net)		659,874,598
Bank Premises, Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment (Net)		3,453,994,993
Other Assets (Net)		11,310,539,491
Property Owned/Acquired		5,841,397,373
Others		5,469,142,118
TOTAL ASSETS	P	106,030,632,123

LIABILITIES

Demand Deposits	P	14,844,337,192
Savings Deposits		14,211,224,913
Time Deposits		29,377,533,672
Due to Bangko Sentral		44,769,228
Due to Banks		313,028
Outstanding Checks/Payment Orders		1,967,378,248
Bills Payable		15,750,020,182
BSP Rediscounts/Special Programs		19,045,668
Interbank Borrowings		15,002,841,926
Others		728,132,588
Unearned Income and Other Deferred Credits		700,161,561
Other Liabilities		10,885,519,595
TOTAL LIABILITIES		87,781,257,619
Minority Interest In Allied Undertakings/Subsidiaries/Affiliates		1,496,063

CAPITAL ACCOUNTS

Capital Stock	P	7,087,057,923
Surplus		11,094,148,397
Surplus Reserves		66,672,121
Other Capital Accounts		
TOTAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	P	18,247,878,441
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	P	106,030,632,123

CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS

Unused Commercial Letters of Credit	P	341,525,214
Bills for Collection		67,985,392
Spot/Future Exchange Sold		9,250,536,156
Spot/Future Exchange Brought		4,354,201,798
Assets Held Under Trust and Investment Management Agreements		9,217,963,866
Invested in		3,126,823,402
Government Securities		
Other Securities, Debt Instruments And Shares of Stock		271,727,022
Loans and Discounts		7,538,657
Other Assets		5,811,874,785
Accountabilities		8,321,335,831
Trust & Other Fiduciary		529,293,635
Common Trust Funds		367,334,400
Investment/Fund Management		2,778,292,806
Other Contingent Accounts		
TOTAL CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS	P	26,010,505,232

Other Information

1. Deposits of		
a Government	P	6,194,839,632
b Banks		235,330,043
c Trust Department		4,524,774,564
2. List of Bank's Financial Subsidiaries		
a UnionBank Currency Brokers Corporation		
b UBP Capital Corporation		
c UBP Securities, Inc		
d Interventure Capital Corporation		

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
MAKATI CITY) S.S.

We, Ana D. Lirio and Guia C. Lim of the above-mentioned bank do solemnly swear that all matters set forth in the above statement of condition are true and correct to the best of our knowledge and belief.

ANA D. LIRIO
First Vice President

GUIA C. LIM
Executive Vice President

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 24th day of April, 2006, affiants exhibiting to me their Community Tax No. 18924258 issued at Muntinlupa on February 13, 2006 and Community Tax No 16917688 issued at Manila on February 27, 2006, respectively.

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www.unionbankph.com

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of April 28, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	4.6	5	4.6	5	323,000
Banco De Oro Univ. Bank	35.5	35.5	35	35.5	1,155,800
Bank of the Phil. Islands	61.5	62	61	61	1,258,500
Chinatrust Comm. Bank	19	19	19	19	100
Citystate Savings Bank	19.75	20.25	19.75	20.25	3,900
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.4	0.41	0.39	0.41	3,080,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	71.5	71.5	71	71.5	158,800
International Exch. Bank	33	34.5	33	34.5	99,600
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	38.5	39	38.5	39	853,900
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	55	60	55	60	1,100
Philippine National Bank	33.5	33.5	33.5	33.5	2,300
Phil. Savings Bank	38	40	37	40	6,300
Security Bank Corp.	46.5	49	46.5	49	118,800
Union Bank of the Phil.	38	38	38	38	100
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Bankard Inc.	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.78	20,000
First Abacus Financial	0.49	0.5	0.49	0.5	460,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	30	30	30	30	10,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	3340	3350	3340	3350	920
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1	1	0.99	1	260,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	200	210	200	210	7,780
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2180	2180	2180	2180	20
Ivantage Corp.	1.1	1.22	1.1	1.22	28,298,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	44	45.5	44	45.5	116,500
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	43.5	44.5	43.5	44.5	706,100
Manila Electric Co. A	12.75	13	12.75	13	1,400
Manila Electric Co. B	18.75	18.75	18.25	18.5	1,122,400
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.5	6.6	6.4	6.5	3,494,000
Petron Corp.	4.3	4.35	4.15	4.2	9,076,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.97	190,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	23,000
CADP Group Corp.	2.28	2.85	2.28	2.85	764,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	5,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	20.75	21	20.75	20.75	156,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	35.5	35.5	35	35.5	360,000
RFM Corp.	0.73	0.73	0.73	0.73	30,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	3.15	3.5	3.15	3.45	5,471,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	160,000
San Miguel Corp. A	63.5	64	63	64	360,500
San Miguel Corp. B	80.5	80.5	80	80	239,900
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	13,000
Universal Robina Corp.	22	22.75	22	22.75	2,389,500
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	1,800,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.48	1.5	1.48	1.48	1,837,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	0.95	0.98	0.95	0.98	130,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.8	5	4.8	5	791,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Active Alliance Inc.	1.78	1.78	1.78	1.78	560,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	400,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	500,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.54	0.54	0.53	0.53	30,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	30,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	20,000,000
Ayala Corp.	360	362.5	360	360	243,910
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.51	0.51	0.51	0.51	170,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	311,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	3,000,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.7	2.7	2.65	2.7	329,000
APC Group Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	1,900,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	5,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.94	0.94	0.93	0.94	2,290,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	15,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.02	1.02	15,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9	9.1	9	9.1	13,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.95	0.96	0.95	0.95	1,730,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	4.1	4.1	4	4.1	3,404,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	3.2	3.3	3.2	3.3	1,231,000
Global Business Hldgs Inc	47	80	47	80	600
House of Investments Inc.	1.38	1.42	1.38	1.42	434,000
JG Summit Holdings Inc.	6.4	6.7	6.3	6.7	2,914,000
Medco Holdings	0.205	0.21	0.2	0.21	1,180,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	100,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc	0.225	0.23	0.225	0.225	1,100,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	420,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.135	0.145	0.135	0.145	5,320,000
SM Investments Corp.	238	238	230	230	122,600
Seafront Resources Corp.	0.6	0.67	0.6	0.66	2,120,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.065	0.0675	0.065	0.0675	30,400,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.125	0.125	0.12	0.12	2,080,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	12.5	12.5	11.75	11.75	6,397,600
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.34	0.36	300,000
Belle Corp.	1.22	1.24	1.22	1.22	5,236,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.3	0.31	0.3	0.3	4,200,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.94	2.04	1.94	2.04	3,599,000
C&P Homes Inc.	1.74	1.74	1.74	1.74	1,000
Cebu Prop. Vent. A	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	60,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.2	0.21	0.2	0.205	4,360,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.65	0.66	0.65	0.66	12,510,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	70,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.026	0.026	0.026	0.026	1,000,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.36	1.42	1.36	1.4	35,863,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	100,000
Gotesco Land Inc.B	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	300,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	3	3	3	3	10,000
Interport Res. B	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	2,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	350,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	320,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	5,500,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.44	1.46	1.42	1.44	133,515,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.25	0.26	0.24	0.245	54,370,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.26	0.27	0.26	0.27	400,000
Polar Property Holdings	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	1,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	9.5	9.9	9.5	9.9	422,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.29	0.32	0.29	0.32	4,920,000
SM Development Corp.	1.66	1.66	1.66	1.66	389,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.9	7.9	7.8	7.8	688,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.125	0.125	0.12	0.125	5,030,000
SERVICE					
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	13	13.5	13	13.5	233,800
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.04	1.06	1.04	1.06	5,120,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	900	905	900	900	88,480
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3	3.05	2.95	3.05	2,281,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2000	2050	2000	2045	107,810
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.215	0.235	0.21	0.23	31,290,000
Imperial Res.	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	5,000,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	3,500,000
Transpacific Broadband	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	20,000
Philweb Corp.	0.027	0.027	0.025	0.026	106,500,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	2.7	2.95	2.7	2.95	1,341,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	12.25	12.25	12	12.25	914,400
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	10,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.26	1.3	1.26	1.3	27,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.74	1.74	1.74	1.74	297,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	700,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.55	0.55	0.54	0.54	360,000
EDUCATION					
Ipeople Inc.	3.25	3.3	3.25	3.25	152,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICE					
Macroasia Corp.	1.96	2.04	1.96	2.02	1,549,000
Paxys Inc	9.4	9.8	9.4	9.8	1,393,000
MINING & OIL					
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	2.7	2.85	2.7	2.8	3,647,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	2.7	2.85	2.7	2.8	2,026,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	89,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	7.4	7.4	7.4	7.4	1,540,000
Benguet Corp. A	12	12.25	12	12	48,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	1.9	1.9	1.88	1.9	92,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.38	0.4	0.38	0.4	72,590,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.42	0.45	0.42	0.45	49,640,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	205,200,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	30,300,000
Omico Corp.	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	272,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	3.95	4	3.85	4	7,122,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	3.95	4.1	3.85	4.1	8,310,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	27.5	27.5	27.5	27.5	838,400
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	200,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.43	0.44	0.42	0.44	800,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	200,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	850,900,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	1,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.9	0.93	0.9	0.9	1,090,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.83	0.93	0.83	0.93	650,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	7.7	8.2	7.4	8.1	1,653,000
PREFERRED					
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	100
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	13.25	13.75	13	13.75	619,500

CURRENCIES

May 1, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.797957	1.000000	51.8260
Japan	Yen	0.006992	0.008763	0.4542
United Kingdom	Pound	1.437919	1.802000	93.3905
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.102904	0.128959	6.6834
Switzerland	Franc	0.633350	0.793714	41.1350
Canada	Dollar	0.710622	0.890551	46.1537
Singapore	Dollar	0.504079	0.631712	32.7391
Australia	Dollar	0.603872	0.756773	39.2205
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.116710	2.652661	137.4768
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.212766	0.266638	13.8188
Brunei	Dollar	0.502492	0.629723	32.6360
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000091	0.000114	0.0059
Thailand	Baht	0.021279	0.026667	1.3820
UAE	Dirham	0.217279	0.272294	14.1119
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.253200	64.9483
Argentina	Peso	0.262918	0.329489	17.0761
Brazil	Real	0.378089	0.473821	24.5562
Denmark	Kroner	0.134072	0.168019	8.7078
India	Rupee	0.017796	0.022302	1.1558
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.219823	0.275482	14.2771
Mexico	New Peso	0.071807	0.089989	4.6638
New Zealand	Dollar	0.505036	0.632911	32.8012
Norway	Kroner	0.128533	0.161077	8.3480
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013288	0.016653	0.8631
South Africa	Rand	0.129738	0.162588	8.4263
Korea	Won	0.000845	0.001059	0.0549
Sweden	Kroner	0.107556	0.134789	6.9856
Syria	Pound	0.015372	0.019264	0.9984
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025034	0.031372	1.6259
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000372	0.000466	0.0242

Retail sector gets ₱100B in foreign investments

Inventory buildup accounts for more than half, says trade exec

By Ronnel W. Domingo

ABOUT P100 BILLION IN INVESTMENTS have been infused by foreign retailers into the country since the local retail trade industry was liberalized six years ago.

Trade Undersecretary Elmer C. Hernandez, who is also the managing head of the Board of Investments, said P48 billion represented the initial outlay which was spent by foreign retailers to start up their businesses here. The additional P52 billion, he said, came largely in the form of inventories.

The Retail Trade Liberalization Act of 2000 opened the local retail industry to foreign investors. It, however, requires foreign retailers to have at least 30 percent local content in their inventories.

"The local content requirement is aimed at providing benefit to local producers and workers while giving more leeway for foreign goods to enter our market," he explained.

Pascual de Guzman, a BOI director in charge of foreign retail investments, said at least 10 multinational retailers had put up shops here since the law was passed.

De Guzman said that of the additional investment infusion, the biggest amounts came from Petron Corp., which is 40-percent owned by Saudi Aramco; the United State's Chevron through Caltex Services Philippines; McDonalds, and The Netherlands' SHV Group, which owns Pilipinas Makro.

The other companies that had set up retail businesses in the country included Louis Vuitton Malletier SA, Adidas Salomon AG and Watsons Personal Care Stores.

"The law allowed these companies to do business here directly instead of doing so through franchises," he said. De Guzman said the influx of additional investments from foreign retailers meant these companies had passed the trial period when they were still determining the viability of investing here.

On the first year of the retail sector liberalization, foreign retailers put in only P470 million in investments. The BOI said they had steadily increased their investments since then to reach P100 billion.

As of Dec. 31, 2004, foreign retailers had 208 stores and generated 11,900 jobs.

Napocor says new power generation capacity needed

By Abigail L. Ho

DEL CALLAR

NEW POWER GENERATION CAPACITY WILL have to be added in Mindanao by this year, in Visayas by 2008 and in Luzon by 2011 to meet the growing power requirements and maintain necessary reserves of these main grids.

In a recent presentation to the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, National Power Corp. president Cyril Del Callar said power supply in Luzon would be stable from 2005-2009 as the existing and committed capacities would be more than enough to meet peak demand plus required reserves.

By 2010, however, he said system net reserves would no longer be enough to meet the 10.3-percent peak cold/back-up reserve requirement.

An additional 253 megawatts (MW) would have to be put in place by 2012, 678 MW by 2013, 1,122 MW by 2014, 1,585 MW by 2015 to meet demand growth over those years, he said.

In the Visayas, he said system gross reserves had been insufficient to meet the 13.1-percent load following/frequency regulation (LFFR) and spinning reserve requirement since the fourth quarter of 2004.

Despite the projected full commissioning of the 110-MW Panay Diesel Power Plant 3 in July, he said there would already be a net reserve deficit of 5 MW this year.

While power supply should become stable by next year with the commissioning of new geothermal capacities, an additional 67 MW would have to be put in place by 2008, 148 MW by 2009, 255 MW by 2010, 422 MW by 2011, 517 MW by 2012, 617 MW by 2013, and 723 MW by 2014, he said.

The situation is worse in Mindanao as its system gross reserve has not been enough to meet the 11.9-percent LFFR and spinning reserve requirement since the last quarter of 2005, according to the presentation.

This despite the transfer of the 32-MW Power Barge 104 (PB 104) last Aug. 30, 2005, and the proposed transfer of the 24-MW PB 101 and the 28-MW PB 102 by January and July, respectively, to the grid.

As a result, recurring power shortages are

NAPOCOR/ B6

SMDC sets '06 capex at ₱800M

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SM DEVELOPMENT CORP., the residential and commercial development arm of mall tycoon Henry Sy, is spending roughly P800 million for capital expenditure this year.

Last year's budget for projects was only P250 million.

This year's capex budget will be used largely to fund three residential projects including the additional phases of the Chateau Elysee near SM Bicutan in Paranaque; the high-rise Mezza Residences beside SM City Sta. Mesa, Manila, and a residential subdivision in Muntinlupa, SMDC president Rogelio R. Cabuoag said.

SMDC recently completed the second phase of its maiden project , the P3.7-billion Chateau Elysee, a six-cluster, six-storey French-Mediterranean inspired condominium tower cluster on a 4.7 hectare lot. The second phase, dubbed Lafayette, with 384 units will be ready for occupancy this year.

Cabuòag said the company might spend about P250 million for Chateau this year.

SMDC is also spending P400 million for Mezza Residences, its P5.2-billion first high-rise project that will cater to entrepreneurs, middle management, medical students and professionals. Mezza will have four towers of 348 units or a total of 1,551 units. The first two towers will be ready for occupancy in 2009.

Also in the pipeline but not yet included in this year's budget are a residential condotel in Baguio, a residential leisure development in Batangas and a residential community development project in Tagaytay.

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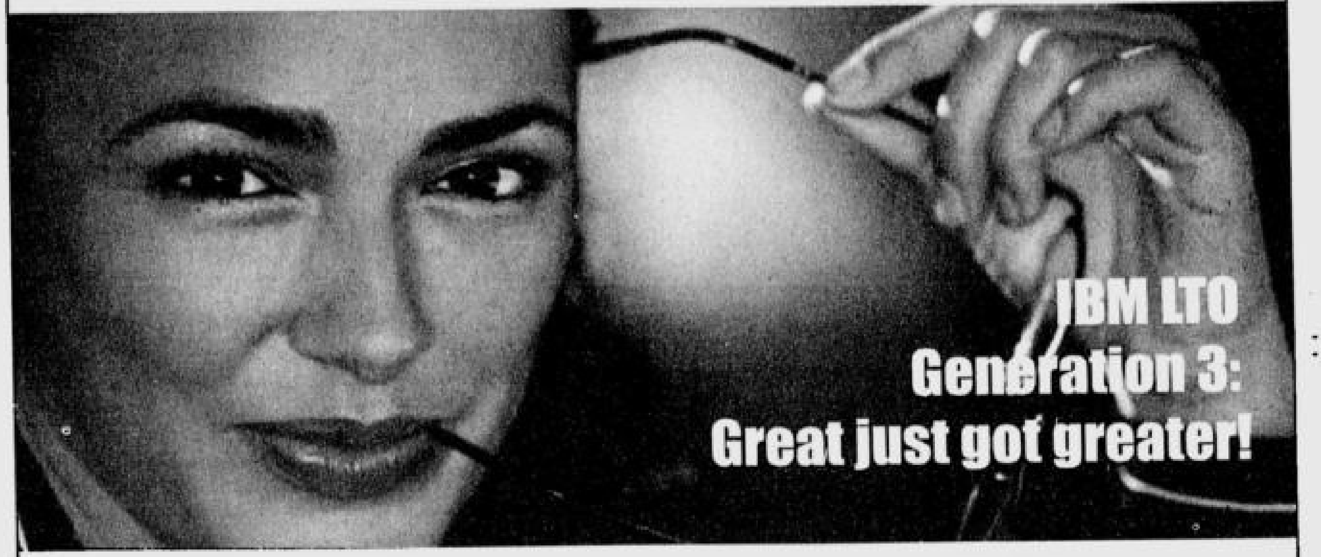

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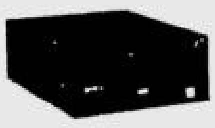

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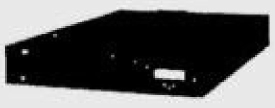

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Belle sells 2-ha Roxas Blvd. property for ₱530M

Developer to use proceeds to pay debt, fund new deals

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

REAL ESTATE DEVELOPER BELLE Corp. has sold a two-hectare lot along Roxas Boulevard in Manila to a local private equity fund for P530 million.

Belle vice chair Willy Ocier said the proceeds from the sale would be used to pay debt and bankroll additional residential projects in Tagaytay.

Ocier, however, declined to name the buyer.

Belle owns 5.6 hectares of land along the Manila Bay area, all of which are on the auction block.

Aside from an outright sale, Belle is also looking at the possibility of entering into joint ventures with land developers for its property adjacent to the soon-to-be-opened P7-billion Mall of Asia project of mall tycoon Henry Sy Sr.

"We are still in negotiations for joint ventures for projects that will cater to the growing call center business. It is near the area where Mall of Asia is putting up its eCom center (call center building)," Ocier said.

"We foresee a lot of need for middle class studios or condominiums (there). This is not the main line of Belle, but we might contribute the land for joint ventures or sell it outright," he added.

After the sale of two hectares out of the 5.6-hectare lot, Belle is looking at raising another P1.2 billion from the sale of the remaining 3.6 hectares.

Ocier said the company may soon ink a deal with an investor for 1.2 hectares out of the 3.6 hectares up for sale within the year.

This may fetch roughly P360 million for Belle.

Belle Bay City Corp. (BBCC), a 44-percent owned subsidiary of Belle, used to be part of a consortium that owned 19 hectares of reclaimed land along Roxas Boulevard.

The property was supposed to be developed into a mixed-use complex with hotels and a casino.

But due to the weakness in the economy and the property sector, shareholders of BBCC decided to dissolve BBCC and divide the property among the shareholders, including Belle.

Ocier also said the company was spending approximately P2 to P3 billion over the next five years for its residential projects.

Belle is currently developing a residential area called Southern Hills in Tagaytay Midlands.

It is also working on new phases for Plantation hills, its farm lots subdivisions on a 50-hectare lot in Tagaytay Highlands in Tanauan, Batangas.

It will also be launching its resort-residential project dubbed Lakelands on Taal Lake.

Lakelands is envisioned to be an international and residential community, which will house an 18-hole golf course, a clubhouse and a wellness center that will cater to overseas Filipinos and foreign retirees.

Lakelands will sit on a 325-hectare peninsula jutting into Taal Lake.

Belle earlier reported a surge in its net income by 234 percent to P731 million in 2005 from P219 million in 2004 due to brisk sales of its property developments.

Commodities' prices rising

(In selected sari-sari stores in Quezon City (January and April 2006)

Commodities	Average prices in pesos		
	Before (January 2006)	Now (End-April 2006)	increase
Rice	21.82	23.27	1.45
Sardines	10.68	11.80	1.11
Coffee (sachet)	2.41	3.18	0.77
Coffee (20g)	1.64	2.18	0.55
Coffee (25g)	3.23	3.23	0.00
Sugar (wash) ¼	5.14	6.05	0.91
Sugar (wash) (sachet)	0.18	0.18	0.00
Sugar (white) (1 kl)	3.09	3.64	0.55
Sugar (white) (1/2)	3.45	4.00	0.55
Sugar (white) (1/4)	1.36	1.55	0.18
Detergent	5.36	5.86	0.50
Detergent (1 bar)	3.36	3.86	0.50
Shampoo	4.09	4.82	0.73
Soft drinks	4.73	5.18	0.45
Powdered Milk	12.45	14.09	1.64
Powdered Milk (box)	7.36	7.55	0.18
Soap	2.27	2.82	0.55
Noodles	2.00	2.59	0.59
Condensed Milk	2.91	3.00	0.09

sample stores:
Meryl Store, Joanna Store, Soreño Store, Monolo Store, Florita Store (in Petchayan St., Brgy Old Capitol Site, QC)
Ardene Store (Rosa St., Brgy. Old Capitol Site, QC)
Dayap Store, Juana Store (Masaya Interior St., Brgy. Old Capitol Site, QC)
Telma's Store, Triple R Store, Juliet's Store (Krus na Ligas, UP Diliman, QC)

Sari-sari stores bear brunt of oil price, VAT hikes

By Bernardita Santillan, Ruth Peñafiel, Engilbert Tagle, Mary Rose Andes and Glaiza Marin
Contributors

ZENAIDA LUCERO PUT UP HER "Nanay Inday's Sari-Sari Store" at Krus na Ligas, Diliman, Quezon City four years ago with just a few items.

Her little store slowly grew in size as business improved, prompting Zenaida to sell even more products, such as rice.

Those days have now been relegated to Zenaida's memory, however, as the combined effects of record high oil prices and the implementation of the expanded Value Added Tax have taken their toll on the buying power of her consumers.

Consumption fell and her customers were no longer buying as much, forcing her to stop selling rice.

"Prices went up just as I started improving the store," Zenaida said in Filipino, "It is so hard to do well these days. I even stopped selling rice because it requires such a huge amount of capital."

Alma Santos, who helps her brother-in-law tend his "Ikong's Store," also in Krus na Ligas, made the same observation, saying that there really has been a decline in sales over the past few months.

"We used to sell a sack of rice in just one day. Today, it takes as long as three days," she said.

Rising prices are the culprit behind the weak sales, but she said she could not do anything about it because she also bought the products for sale at higher prices.

"If we bought the merchandise at high prices, we also have to sell them at high prices," she added.

Bong Abrena of "Bong and Lalyn's Store" said his profit was slowly being eaten up by rising prices.

"It is now all right to earn a small profit, as long as products are sold," he said.

The sari-sari store owners said that while they understood the reasons behind the government's implementation of the expanded VAT, and the recent increase in the VAT rate from 10 percent to 12 percent, they could not help but feel bad about the policy and its adverse effect on their sole means of livelihood.

This despite the government's vow that the added revenues would go to general services, such as road repairs and health services.

"Very few buy milk nowadays, even coffee creamer," said Marissa Dayap, a store owner at Masaya Interior, Barangay Old Capitol Site, Q.C.

Dayap said the expanded VAT and the increased VAT rate made consumers scrimp, thus, store owners are having a hard time getting back their capital and funding their own needs.

According to Salvador Sibayan, chairman of the Research and Extension Department, University of the Philippines Institute of Small Scale Industries (UPISSI), "producers are doing gimmicks and promos to encourage the public to buy. Hopefully, increased in sales volume will reach a level that can cover the cost of the promo. Other companies have the ulterior motive of trying to get a bigger share of the market."

Sari-sari store owners, however, are not interested in promotions, since these would not appeal to their customers.

Sibayan said there was a good number of Filipinos who do not have much disposable income.

"They would rather spend this (income) on the essentials. In some areas in the city, people buy one-fourth kilo of rice just to get by," he said.

Armando Canicula, Trade and Industry Development specialist, Bureau of Small and Medium Enterprises Development (BSMED) of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), agreed that the consumers' purchasing power has weakened because of higher prices.

"Because of this, people don't focus on what they want, they focus on what they need," Canicula added.

He thus advised micro enterprises to just weather the crisis and remain aggressive.

"One characteristic of a businessman is being able to take risks. It's what they need to learn especially in coping with our present economy," Canicula said.

Mindoro farmers to plant more rice

CITY OF CALAPAN—TO TAKE advantage of increased rainfall due to the La Niña weather phenomenon, the national government has decided to give subsidies to farmers of Oriental Mindoro so they could plant rice on another 2,000 hectares of rainfed lowland areas.

Provincial agriculturist Rodolfo Valdez said the Department of Agriculture would implement the 50-50 scheme for rice production, which would use certified seeds, during the May-October planting season.

"Normally, farmers would pay P880 a bag of 40 kilos of certified seeds. Under the La Niña project, half of this cost will be subsidized by the government—including four packets of bio-N fertilizer to be given to the farmers," Valdez said in a phone interview.

The unusual amount of rainfall during La Niña is expected to last until next year, which is welcome news for rice producers as rice is dependent on rain, especially in the Philippines where only a few areas are irrigated.

Valdez also said that the certified seeds to be used in the program are of higher quality.

When harvested, breeder seeds coming from the International Rice Research Institute and PhilRice become foundation seeds, which are then sent to the provinces, and in turn planted by seed growers who register them.

Upon harvest, these registered seeds qualify as certified seeds.

"There are 30 active seed growers throughout the province," said Valdez.

Instead of ordinary or good seeds, in-bred high-yielding variety or HYV seeds are used.

The average yield a hectare in Oriental Mindoro is 4.6 metric tons or 92 cavans, whereas when hybrid seeds are used, the average yield a hectare goes up to is 5.25 metric tons or 106 cavans.

Rehabilitation of agricultural areas affected by last December's floods in Oriental Mindoro is also ongoing, Valdez said.

Around 500 kilos of assorted vegetable seeds were delivered by Region 4-B last April 7 and distributed to the various municipalities, but the bulk was given to the three towns most affected by the floods—Calapan, Naujan and Baco.

Some 200,000 pieces of *tilapia* fingerlings were also delivered on April 7 while another 600,000 will be coming from BFAR in Muñoz, Nueva Ecija.

Oriental Mindoro is among the top producers of hybrid seeds.

Total rice production is 39,000 hectares, of which 14-15 percent are from hybrid rice seeds. *Marciano T. Virola, Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Ayala to invest ₱1B in Cebu mall expansion

By Irene R. Sino Cruz
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—AYALA SUBSIDIARY CEBU Holdings Inc. will invest over P1 billion in the expansion of its shopping mall in Cebu, company president Jose Rene Almendras said.

The expansion at the Ayala Center Cebu will come in two stages—the building will first be expanded to house Rustan's Supermarket then the lagoon area will be developed, Almendras said.

"CHI will strengthen its retail rental portfolio by 17 percent or an additional 13,500 square meters of space at Ayala Center Cebu," he said during the annual stockholders' meeting held last week.

The lagoon development alone will cost P870 million, while the expansion building at the former passenger jeepney terminal will cost over P200 million, he added.

The expansion building will have two basements and three levels, with Rustan's Supermarket occupying the ground floor, according to Cebu Holdings operations officer Celeste Bernardine Dy.

According to Dy, retail firms will occupy the other two floors. "We're looking at around 50 additional merchants."

The expansion building will have a total space of 7,000 square meters, with 2,000 square meters set aside for Rustan's Supermarket.

On the other hand, the lagoon area development will comprise of a number of multi-level buildings, Almendras said.

"You've never seen anything like it. It's not a mall anymore. It's a lifestyle. You can shop, walk around, and spend some time in it. You will be closer to nature. You can sit down; hear water coming through, and birds chirping. There will be an open area," he added.

The lagoon development will also include a venue for events, such as concerts, that could accommodate a sizeable number of people, Almendras said.

The construction of the expansion building will start in a few weeks and Rustan's will be operational by the end of the year, he said.

He said the expansion building would be full by the time it opens since there were 111 pending applications for mall spaces.

"They have been waiting for three years," Almendras said.

He noted that the demand for commercial spaces, from Manila-based, local and international retail firms, has been going up.

"Our retail is very strong. The growth is fantastic. I think the merchants in the mall are happy. Sales growth is very strong," Almendras said.

He told stockholders that the Ayala Center Cebu's gross revenues have reached P371.8 million last year.

"We are making sure the enhancement to the mall is very Cebuano. There's a place for tourists, a place for family. It's along those lines," Almendras said.

CHI's net income in 2005 grew to P117.3 million, up 30 percent from the previous year's P90.6 million, he said.

The company's gross revenues rose to P690.2 million.

Aside from the P109.5 million contribution from the mall, the company also earned P109.5 million from the lot sales in Cebu Business Park and subsidiary Cebu Property Ventures Development Corp. and P50.3 million from office rentals.

Amara, the company's seaside residential project, also registered P189.7 million in gross sales.

The overseas Filipino workers market accounted for 27 percent of Amara sales, he said.

The value of Cebu Holdings shares has also improved, with the price per share rising from 0.98 centavos in the first quarter of 2005 to the present price of P2, Almendras said.

He added that the price per share has increased by more than 500 percent over the 0.38 centavos in the first quarter of 2001.

Napocor says new power generation capacity needed

From page B5

expected to take place, particularly during peak periods when generators or associated transmission lines are on forced outage.

"Power shortages are expected to worsen during the summer months due to the adverse effect of El Niño on hydro capacity," Del Callar said.

From 2007 to 2008, however, power supply should stabilize with the commissioning of the 200-MW Mindanao coal-fired power plant beginning January next year, he said.

He said that while this added capacity should enable the Mindanao grid to meet the LF-FR and spinning reserve requirement, there would not be enough remaining system net reserve to meet the 9.1-percent cold/back-up reserve requirement.

"By 2009, additional new capacity of about 57 MW is needed and thereafter, an average of 116 MW annually," he said.

To prevent a power crisis in any of the three main grids, he said the operating efficiency of existing plants should be optimized and capacity enhancements in these facilities should be studied and implemented.

The National Transmission Corp. should also complete all its crucial transmission projects to eliminate network bottlenecks and assure the delivery of reliable power to customers.

Del Monte profit down 36% in Q1

From page B3

sales, dipped 1 percent to $17.9 million due to lower volume. The soft market in Europe led to disappointing sales of concentrated and processed pineapple.

The group was also affected by higher costs of raw materials, tinplate and energy.

Corporate income tax in the Philippines was raised to 35 percent from 32 percent last November.

Reduced operating expenses helped cushion the decline in net profit. The group maintained a net cash position. This was reduced to $12.9 million from $18.4 million in 2005 due to higher working capital costs, higher inventory levels resulting from lower sales and increased expenditure in growing crops.

NutriAsia Pacific Ltd., Del Monte's new shareholder, is working closely with the group to develop strategies that will enhance Del Monte's profitability in its existing markets such as the Philippines, China and India.

"As we move into the transition process, our goals are to enhance market positions in all our product categories, to reinvigorate Del Monte's export businesses and to identify cost savings," said Joselito D. Campos Jr., director at Del Monte.

The transition team—consisting of representatives from San Miguel and the NutriAsia Group of Companies—had began their review of Del Monte's operations in April this year.

Campos believes that new products can be fast tracked and that product distribution enhanced by tapping new shareholders' vast distribution network in the Asia Pacific region.

While the second quarter will continue to be challenging, Del Monte expects results to improve in the second half.

Capital expenditure for 2006 is unchanged at $1 million.

Delfina Mamaril Reyes

December 22, 1921 – April 28, 2006

Peacefully joined her Creator at the age of 84.

Her loving husband, **Mauricio F. Reyes**; children **Annabelle Reyes Borromeo & Andy**, and **Luz M. Reyes**; grandchildren, **Timothy & Andrew**; brothers & sister, **Canor** (†), **Eling** (†), **Ben**, **Jose** (†), **Pilo** (†), **Peding** (†) & **Andring** and other relatives request your prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Solace 1 Chapel, Arlington Memorial Chapels, Araneta Ave., Q.C. and will be brought to Funeraria Paz, Araneta Avenue for cremation service after the 8 a.m. Mass on May 3, 2006, Wednesday.

More Classified Ads on Page A12

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Her remains lie in state at St. Peter Memorial Chapels, Quezon Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on May 3, 2006.

LORINDA M. CARLOS

(former) EXECUTIVE DIRECTO
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Passed away to join our Creator
on April 30, 2006 at the age of 73.

Her bereaved family **ROLANDO** and **OFELIA**, **CARLOS** (†) and **ELSA**, **CORA** and **ANDY**, nieces, nephews, grandnieces, grandnephews, and other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies at the Mabini and Bonifacio Chapels, La Funeraria Paz-Sucat (inside Manila Memorial Park) Parañaque Cit .

Cremation will be on Frida , Ma 5, 2006 at the Manila Memorial Park Cremator . Interment will be on Saturda , Ma 6th at Cabanatuan City Cemeter .

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Eleuterio Reyes Escober, Sr.

Joined his Creator on April 29, 2006 at the age of 81.

His loving wife **Raquel**; children **Joy & Edwin Mendiola**, **Iris & Gino**; **Brenda & Ricky Torres**, **Katrina & Richard Baylon**, **Ria**, **David & Daniella Kairuz**, **Jayjay**; **Junn & Mila Escober**, **Michael**, **Amy & Mica Escober**, **Martin**, **Marc & Matthew**; **Butch & Carla Escober**, **Lorenzo & Enrique**. Sisters **Rosa Escober & Lilia Javier**; brother **Teodoro Escober**; nieces & nephews **Tina & Jojo Rillera**, **Joshua**, **Frances & Jerome**; **JB & Amy Belen**, **Alexa**; and **Maritess Sudario** give thanks to the Lord for the blessing of his life.

His remains lie in state at the La Funeraria Paz in Sucat, Parañaque. Viewing time is from 10 a.m. - 12 a.m. Cremation Service will be on May 4, 2006 at 1 p.m.

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CLASSIFIEDS

A Voice – and Muscle – for the Disabled

MANY A DISABLED PERSON CAN JUST content themselves with being in a corner and wallowing in self-pity.

Not Ms. Deanna Gregorio. Diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis at a young age, the feisty lady did not allow the crippling disease to stop nor even slow her down.

The founding member and current president of the Philippine Multiple Sclerosis Society is also currently the chairperson of the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC), a diverse, multi-sectoral body that encompasses 14 sectors which includes people with disabilities (PWDs).

Her agenda in the NAPC goes by the acronym "HELP", which stands for: H–ealth; E – ducation; L – ivelihood and P – olitics and Empowerment, with the first (health) being a prerequisite to the next three.

To the members of the PMSS and the NAPC, Ms. Gregorio serves as the best example for the empowerment of individuals not only with Multiple Sclerosis, but all those who are disabled. Describing her affliction as "*parang kandila na kinakapos,*" Ms. Gregorio, nevertheless is the very picture of energy. Through sheer will, she learned to walk inspire of the excruciating pain that she has to constantly endure.

She will not hesitate to harangue anybody for acts of inconsideration for disabled people. Now, with Ms. Gregorio on their side, PWDs can now feel a sense of hope and empowerment.

People, Events & Products

GSK celebrates motherhood

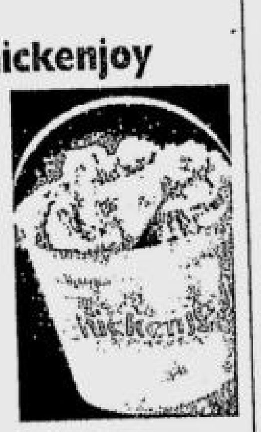
MOTHERHOOD IS NO MEAN FEAT. IT IS, FOR many, the culmination of womanhood. And to celebrate motherhood, GlaxoSmithKline's Family Vaccines Program joins the nation in celefbrating Mother's Day as it mounts an event to honor Mom, the heroine of the Filipino family. On May 7, GlaxoSmithKline gives all moms a special treat with "Lets Celebrate Motherhood" at the Festival Mall Main Activity Area in Alabang. The whole day event kicks off with fun and exciting activities that include face painting and arts and crafts activities for the whole family. A special consultation area will also be set up with medical experts on hand to provide specific information on complete family protection through vaccination. Of course, a wonderful treat for mom has been planned - a spa where she can enjoy pampering that would make her feel really special. A show especially prepared to honor mothers will be the highlight of the event, with Chiqui Roa-Puno, Suzy Entrata-Abrera and Jackie Lou Blanco.

PACMAN AT CITY LIFESTYLE SPA & FITNESS CENTER

City Lifestyle Spa & Fitness Center, the country's largest and most luxurious spa welcomed with warmth The People's Champion Manny 'Pacman' Pacquiao to its spa and fitness center last Feb. 8. Upon signing, he was awarded the Platinum Membership by the management for him and his family to enjoy its privileges and benefits for 3 years. In photo are: operations manager Howard G. Co, Manny 'Pacman' Pacquiao and marketing manager Arleen C. Bautista. City Lifestyle Spa & Fitness Center is located at #60 Timog Avenue cor Tomas Morato, QC.

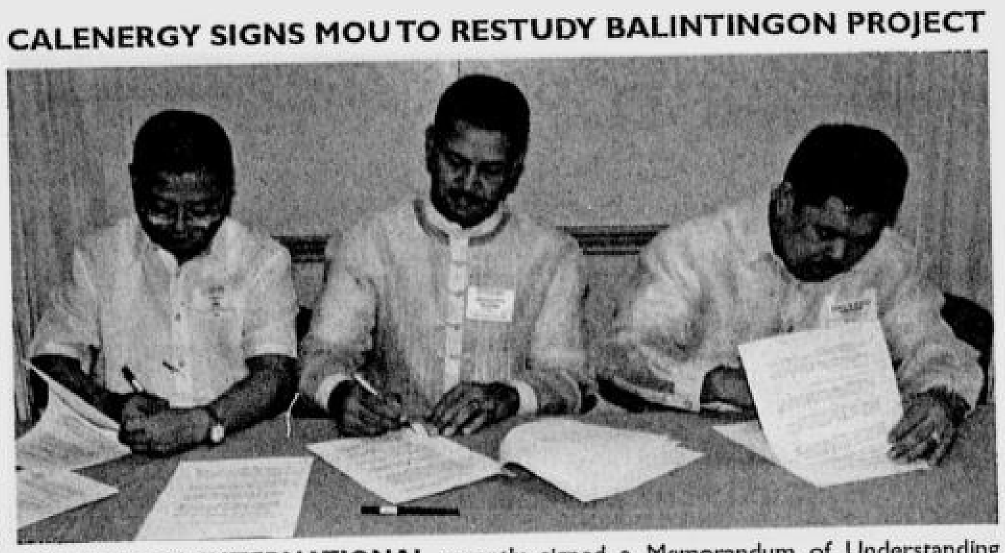
Product FILES

Another Reason to enjoy Chickenjoy



FOR FAMILIES AND BARKADAS EVERYWHERE, the time has come yet again for the requisite summer outing to the country's hottest beaches and resorts. But before you hit the road, chalk up a quick checklist – swimwear, sunblock and new Chickenjoy-in-a-bucket! The fried chicken recipe you just love now comes in a sturdy and reusable bucket that's perfect for toting around the city. Order Package A at only P399 for a completely delightful treat that comes complete with drinks and dessert – 6 pieces Chickenjoy, 3 orders of rice, 3 regular softdrinks and your choice of 3 'Zert pies. Better yet, go for Package B at only P429 to get the same Treat A package plus 3 orders of Jolly Spaghetti for a one-of-a-kind summer surprise that's both filling and appetizing. So bring the crispylicious, juicylicious goodness of Jollibee Chickenjoy in the new bucket packaging. You'll surely have buckets of fun with friends and family under the summer sun!

CALENERGY SIGNS MOU TO RESTUDY BALINTINGON PROJECT



CALENERGY INTERNATIONAL recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) and the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) to restudy the feasibility of the proposed Balintingon Reservoir Multipurpose Project in Nueva Ecija. The project, which originally involved irrigation and hydroelectric power components, will be re-evaluated by CalEnergy to include further benefits such as water supply for domestic consumption and flood control. Photo shows CalEnergy President Joseph L. Sullivan, NIA Administrator Baltazar Usis and MWSS Administrator Orlando Hondrade signing the MOU. The project, if viable, is expected to augment the water supply of the Angat Reservoir which irrigates 18,000 hectares of ricelands in Nueva Ecija, Pampanga and Bulacan, while generating 44 MW of hydroelectric power.

ADV'

BUSINESS

Annual review of tax incentives sought

Finance wants cost-benefit analysis

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE IS SEEKING AN ANNUAL review of the cost-effectiveness of the fiscal incentives granted to industries listed in the Board of Investments' Investment Priorities Plan (IPP).

Stressing the need to plug revenue losses from what it considers redundant tax perks, the DOF said a cost-benefit analysis of the fiscal incentives granted to IPP-listed industries be made on a regular basis.

A finance official said the department had aired this recommendation in recent meetings of economic agencies.

This way, the official said, the government would have firm basis in selecting industries that would be given tax breaks.

The DOF adopted this position based on a study that showed that more than 80 percent of the fiscal incentives granted to firms registered with the BOI were redundant. The DOF said this meant recipient investors would have invested in the county even without the fiscal incentives offered by the government.

Estimates showed that the government had been giving out P300 billion worth of fiscal incentives yearly.

Under the proposed cost-benefit analysis, the government would be able to monitor whether the incentives had helped boost growth of the recipient industries and whether the incentives were actually a necessity for their development.

Earlier, President Macapagal-Arroyo approved the 2006 list of preferred industries that qualified for incentives. The IPP list included agribusiness, health-care and wellness, information and communication technology, electronics, motor vehicle, energy infrastructure, tourism, shipbuilding and shipping, jewelry and fashion garments.

The incentives include income tax holiday; tax- and duty-free importation of breeding stocks, genetic materials, spare parts and supplies; exemption from wharfage; and exemption from local business taxes, among others.

A pending bill in Congress seeks to rationalize the fiscal incentives granted to industries. But the official said that while waiting for the law, the government could do an administrative measure to limit foregone revenues brought about by "redundant" fiscal incentives.

The official admitted though that pushing for the regular review of the fiscal incentives would not be easy because it should be the BOI's task.

The BOI and the DOF have been at loggerheads over the issue of fiscal incentives. While the DOF is concerned about huge revenue losses, the BOI said the incentives were essential to make the Philippines competitive in attracting foreign direct investments.

Non-traditional coco products exports down 15%

By Ronnel W. Domingo

EXPORT EARNINGS FROM NON-TRADITIONAL coconut-based products last year dropped by 15 percent to $2.5 million (about P130 million) from $3 million in 2004.

Data from the Philippine Coconut Authority showed that in terms of volume, shipments went down by 3.5 percent to 1,610 metric tons last year from 1,669 MT in 2004.

Makapuno, also known as coconut sport, remained the best seller last year. However, its export value and volume dropped by 33 percent.

The biggest buyers of makapuno were the US accounting for 265 metric tons or 42.6 percent of the total. The United Arab Emirates bought 59 MT; Canada, 54 MT; the Netherlands, 39 MT; Guam, 25 MT, and Saudi Arabia, 25 MT.

Coco vinegar last year registered the biggest growth with earnings increasing by 39 percent to about $272,000 and volume rising 73 percent to 392 MT.

The US was also the leading importer of coco vinegar accounting for 130 MT or a third of the total, UAE buyers got 37 MT; Japan, 30 MT; Australia, 28 MT, and Saudi Arabia, 25 MT.

Another product that showed positive growth rate was coco chips, with earnings posting 30 percent growth to about $839,000 and volume growing 16 percent to 596 MT.

American buyers gobbled up 160 MT or 26.8 percent of the total while the Germans got 137 MT; Dutch, 55 MT; Japanese, 46 MT; Belgians, 38 MT; Spanish, 34 MT, and Canadians, 25 MT.

Reporting the worst performance was coconut water, with earnings down by 38 percent to about $196,000 and volume shrinking 45 percent to about 233,000 liters.

All major markets reported reduce purchases with the United Kingdom down by half to 98,000 liters; Japan by 55.5 percent to some 36,000 liters, and Canada by 72.5 percent to about 29,000 liters.

However, markets for coconut water expanded in the Netherlands, the US, Saudi Arabia and 14 other countries.

Earlier, the United Coconut Associations of the Philippines reported a 14.6-percent increase in the export volumes of traditional coconut products that include coconut oil, copra meal, dessicated coconut and oleochemicals.

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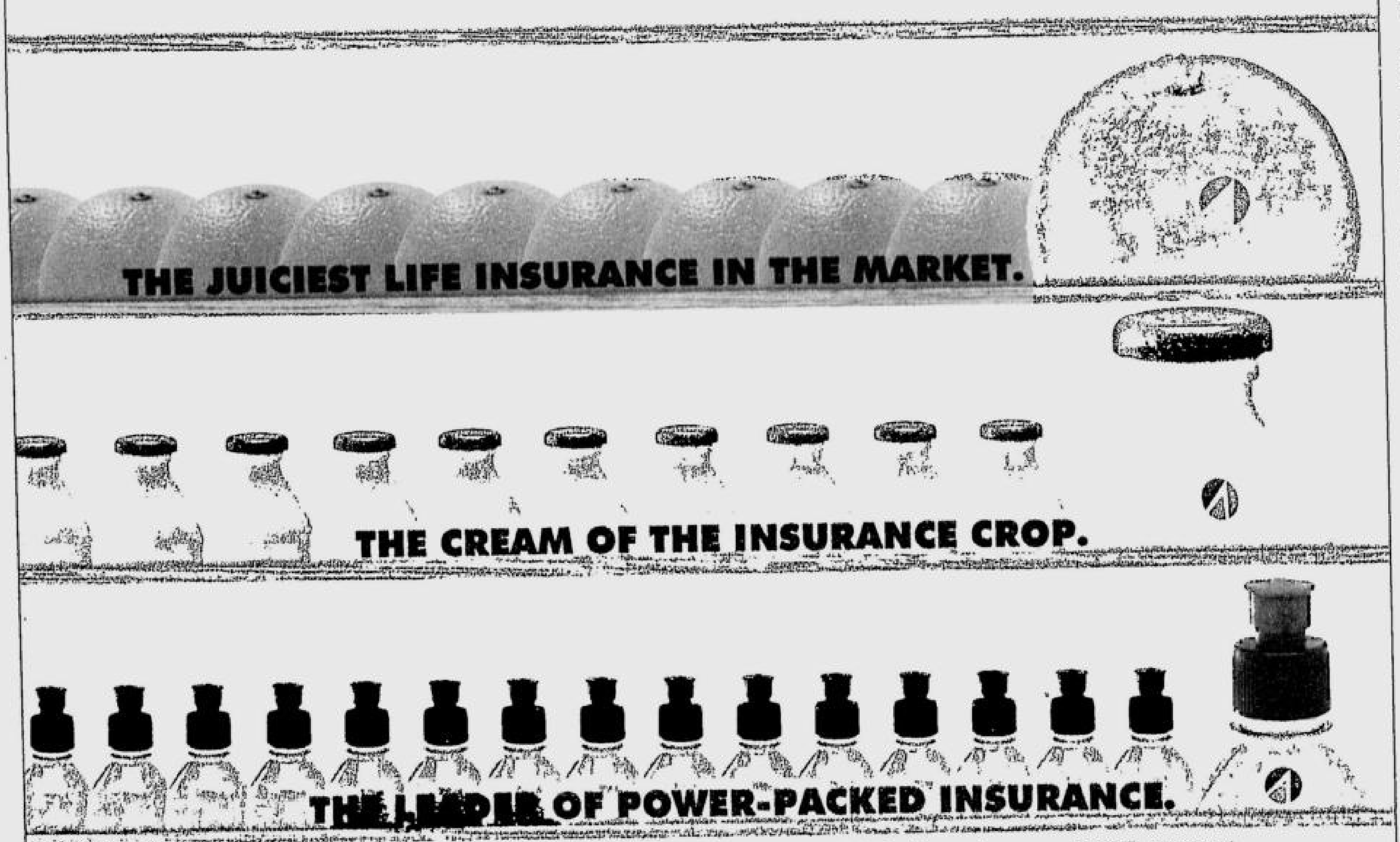

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CONTROLLING portion sizes for weight loss /C5

The dawn of a new woman

By Alex Y. Vergara

ACTRESS DAWN ZULUETA IS the picture of a fulfilled woman these days. Not only did she finally realize her wish to become a mother after waiting for seven years, she also seems to be winning her ongoing battle with the bulge.

From a post-pregnancy weight of 155 lb, she's now down to 134—a mere 9 lb away from her ideal weight of 125. Because television is such an unforgiving medium, instantly "adding" 10 lb even to the slimmest of stars, Zulueta needs to trim down further to 118.

"I'm slowly but surely getting there," says Zulueta, clad in a clingy black jersey dress with a plunging neckline.

Thanks to Marie France, shedding excess pounds without resorting to strenuous exercise, diet pills and fad diets has become doable for women like Zulueta. She has even found a solution to her pesky "saddlebags" that used to bother her even when she was a slim and swinging single.

"I was determined to stay as slim as possible even when I was pregnant," she says. "Unfortunately, it didn't happen the way I wanted, as I gained more than the normally acceptable 25 lb."

But every unsightly pound she gained seemed worth it. Zulueta and husband Anton Lagdameo are now the proud parents of 7-month-old Jacobo, after unceasing prayers and constant visits to the doctor.

It was a difficult pregnancy to say the least, one that required Zulueta, whose immune system seemed to have gone haywire, to take steroids to keep her body from rejecting her own baby.

"Apart from causing water retention, the steroids induced Dawn's stomach to produce more acid," says Dr. Ariel Torres of Marie France. "That's why you can't take steroids orally on an empty stomach."

The unwanted side effects, of course, came in the form of bloating, weight gain and an "incredulous" appetite for food, says Zulueta. Apart from wreaking havoc on her figure, her knees began to hurt because of the added weight.

"I'm 37 and I suddenly felt my age," she says with self-deprecating humor. "Even if I wanted to look and act like somebody who's 10 years younger, there was no denying the fact that I felt old and wasn't in tiptop shape."

Despite the precautions, Jacobo arrived two months early. To make matters worse, Zulueta had to deliver him via Caesarean section. The Caesarean operation prevented her from hitting the gym for at least four months.

Zulueta was about to resort to liposuction, then decided against it after learning that she might have to undergo another one if and when she got pregnant again. She realized the procedure, as well as fad diets like South Beach, wasn't a long-term solution for overall weight loss.

So, instead of depriving herself of her favorite foods, Zulueta tries to eat sensibly. She also tries to avoid carbohydrates and other calorie-laden fare a few hours before bedtime.

"I was raring to get back in shape and go back to work back then," she says as she points to her "before" photo taken some two months after giving birth. She insists the life-size image looked a lot better and slimmer compared to how big she really was.

The picture was taken during the first week of December last year—around the time Jacobo was expected—while her "after" photo was shot exactly three months later.

Breastfeeding, which she did during Jacobo's first month, and waking up in the middle of the night to check on her firstborn did little to zap those unwanted pounds. Then Marie France came into the picture.

"I was a bit depressed since I couldn't do much," Zulueta says, "so when the offer from Marie France came, I thought I had nothing to lose. I gave it a try."

It was also a blessing in disguise, as premature Jacobo needed to stay a bit longer in Manila to be monitored by doctors. This afforded Zulueta, who now calls Davao her home, time to undergo daily treatments at Marie France for a full two months.

Following her return to Davao, Zulueta sees to it that she spends at least two extended sessions at Marie France whenever she flies every two weeks to Manila to tape scenes for her afternoon soap "Now and Forever."

"A visit usually lasts 35-45 minutes," says Torres. "But if you want to experience a more dramatic weight loss, we recommend longer treatment time, done with more frequency."

A typical session for Zulueta consists of such procedures and wraps as Endermologie, Vera Pulse Fat Reducer, Physique Inch-Loss Treatment and Fat Mobilization System. She will be trying Marie France's newest treatment, Ultra Shape.

Zulueta finds the Marie France approach multi-pronged: It promotes weight loss as it induces inch loss. It also addresses such concerns as bloating, sagging muscles and perennially stubborn cellulite, which, says Torres, is trapped fat.

"It takes a long time for a person to develop cellulite," he adds, "so naturally it takes quite some time to get rid of it. What we do is dissipate fat by heat."

Vera Pulse, for instance, works via ultrasound waves that penetrate the skin to reach the adipose tissue where fats and cellulite are trapped. It reportedly liquefies fatty deposits and stimulates the release of toxins from the body.

Endermologie is a complementary treatment that relies on the action of rollers that release deep tissues trapped in fat. By metabolizing fat and increasing collagen in the fibers, Endermologie eliminates the hard, rippled appearance of cellulite in the arms, thighs, legs, abdomen and buttocks.

Coupled with the right exercise routine (Zulueta is giving her body a few more months to recover before hitting the gym), which Marie France doesn't discourage, the treatments may be a woman's most effective tools in her quest to slim down and manage weight.

"I definitely recommend Marie France to women who are undergoing a similar experience like mine," Zulueta says. "But I'm definitely not finished yet. I consider myself a work in progress."

DAWN Zulueta (beside her "before" photo taken several months ago): "I'm still a work in progress."

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

With Marie France's help, Dawn Zulueta seems well on her way to slimming down from 155 pounds to her old weight of 125

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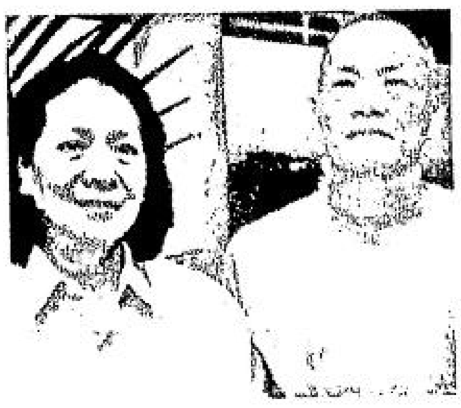

MARGIE and Mike Benedicto

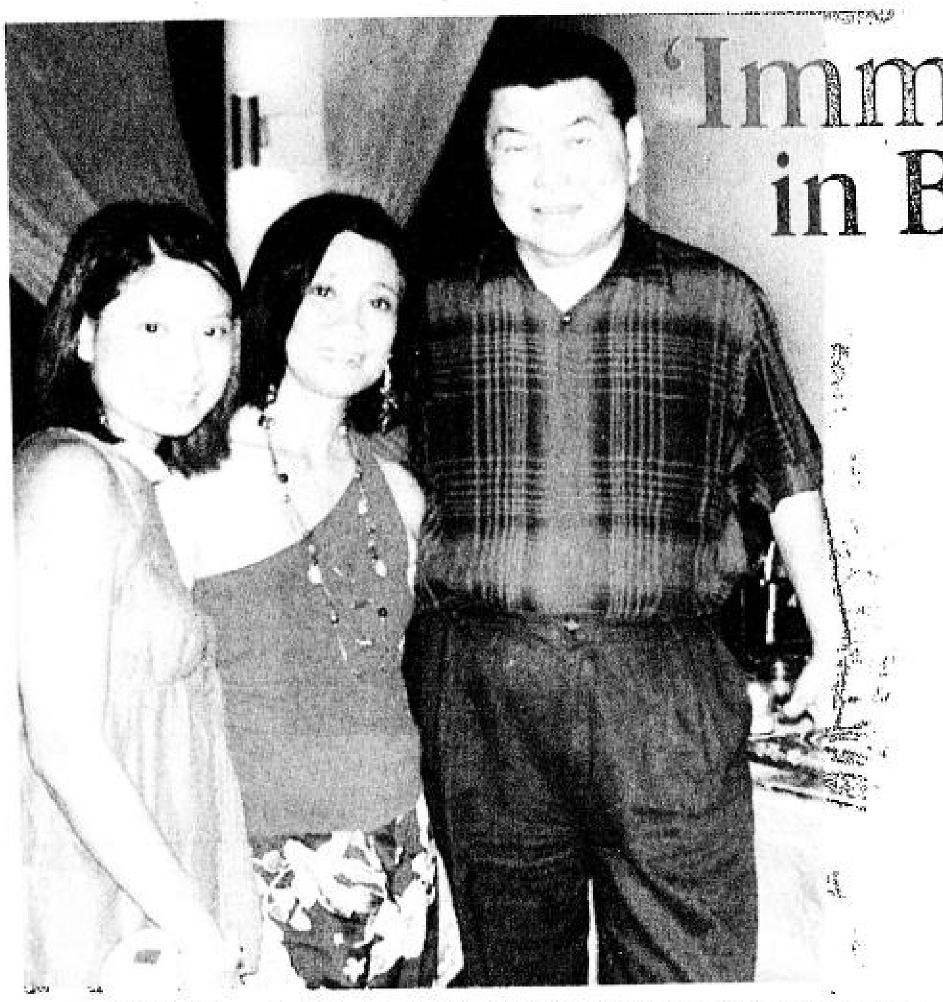
JR and Melinda Yusay

EDDIE and Baby Benares

NANETTE Sanson and Margie Benedicto

AGNES Opinion and Louce Ozoa

'Immigrants' in Boracay


THE SOUTHERN royals of the Pearl of the Pacific: only daughter Rita, with mother Marilou Tirol S. and our king of the day, Greg Sanson

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Hagen using **Kodak** EasyShare system

IT WAS A SUPER NICE, FUN, unforgettable birthday bash for Iloilo's sugar baron, owner of the fabulous, one of the best, Pearl of the Pacific Resort and fantastic spa, **Greg Sanson**. His childhood pals all "migrated" from Iloilo to the exotic island of Boracay for a week of partying, *palanggas*.

Not wanting to miss this once-a-year happening were Greg S.' super close gang mates from his college days. We, members of the group popularly known as The Junior Circle, reminisced how we used to commute between Iloilo and Bacolod for grand parties hosted by the attractive Mila Lacson, now **Mila L. Clemente**.

At the time, we would get the hot bands from Manila like The Hi-Jacks and boogie till way past 3 am.

For the Greg S.' bash, the South's sugar barons and baronesses came in full force, *palanggas*—hot, hot namedroppables like **Juan Miguel Benedicto** with wife **Margie Jamora**; **Felicito Sanson** and wife **Nanet Lizares**; **Ed Benares** with wife **Josefina Locsin**; **Quirico** and **Melinda Yusay**; **Allex** and **Lucy Ozoa**; and **Marlin Banson Gamboa**.

Southern belle **Marilou Tirol**, Greg's fashionable wife, couldn't wait to sit down for a chat at the Pearl with other Assumption gals like **Celing Balderama Lopez** and Josefina Locsin Banares; Lucy Ozoa, who went to the US with Marilou S. to pursue their master's degrees—Lucy O. in New York and Marilou S. in Philadelphia.

The Sansons' only daughter, young and brilliant, super achiever **Rita S.**, jetted in from *Manille* despite her hectic schedule as she attended to countless corporate events lined up for the coming months. Pearl is the favorite venue for such activities. After all, *palanggas*, the hotel is in an exclusive location and has a wide and pristine beach front.

The hot band from Iloilo headed by **Romy Jorolan** rocked the place with rock-and-roll tunes from the '50s to today's hip sounds. One guest, **Mike Sandro Rieta**, commented, "Hey, I wasn't born yet at that time." Everyone yelled back, "Same here," followed by roars of laughter.

One of the partying men asked Romy H. to sing "To All the Girls I've Loved Before." Immediately after the song was performed, his witty wife stood up and asked Romy to sing next "Please Release Me," which brought loud applause and whistles mostly from the wives present.

There were also ballroom dancing and karaoke, with **Thomas Adam** voted as best singer of the evening. **Louie Cruz** jokingly insisted that if he did take singing lessons, he should ask for a refund.

The hotel chef went all out in preparing an excellent dinner which included Italian and other international dishes, as well as a couple of yummy local items, *palanggas*.

The must-have blowing out of the candles was done to endless applause, after the happy invitees wished him tons of other fun birthdays like this one. Earlier, before cocktails, the guests and the Sanson *famille* attended a Thanksgiving Mass at the most unique, beautiful, serene shrine tucked away in the lush forest on the grounds of the Pearl of the Pacific.

Hey, here's to long life, good health and tons of happiness for our king for a day, Greg Sanson.

Cheers, *palangga*!

Converse-ation pieces

Converse addicts from all walks of life—and believe me, *palanggas*, there are tons of us from the academe, fashion, show biz and today's hip set—were shown gorgeous prime pieces from Converse's latest to-die-for and drool over Spring-Summer 2006 collection at the elegant Conservatory of the Peninsula Manila Hotel.

University of the Philippines basketball player and teacher **Jenkins Mesina**; consistent college MVP and Brent International School basketball coach **Erwin Paul Sanchez**; musician, multi-talented spitfire **Aimee Marcos**; early-morning TV show host and heartthrob **Drew Arellano**; actress, host and VJ **Mariel Rodriguez**; and yours truly, plus tons of the country's most beautiful pro models, tried out the new eye-catching shoes and latest apparel. The new collection also sees the return of classic designs from Converse, dahlings.

The collection includes the true American icon: Chuck Taylor All Stars, the athletic shoes that started it all in 1923, and are as popular today as they were 83 years ago; Chuck Taylor Slip Ons, which have the canvas-and-rubber look of the original sans laces.

Hey, nobody can top the original basketball shoes, "The First School." The 2006 collection showcases the tradition and excellent performance the brand has been known for through the years.

Moi can rightfully declare topping the list is the "Weapon," an all-time classic that is celebrating its 20th anniversary with two limited-edition models. For the energetic young, one star is designed especially for today's new sports people.

To finish off with a bang, Converse has reissued North Carolina Pro Leather, the shoes of choice of '90s legend **Michael Jordan**, as well as basketball great **Julius "The Doctor" Irving**.

Converse just happens to be one of my favorite casual shoes (I have eight pairs in different eye-catching colors, and can't get enough of these casual cool shoes). They are now the shoes for the court and for the street for all ages, complementing your personality and your lifestyle.

Hey, get into the groove yourself, *palanggas*, with the Spring-Summer 2006 collection that oozes with attitude. For more updates and to view this fab, colorful complete collection, do log on to www.converse.com.ph

MARISSA Araki and Romy Jorolan

SOUL MATES. Sandro Rieta, main man of Boracay's popular Mac Sandro's Resto, and witty Louie Cruz

OLD-WEALTH sugar baroness: Celing Lopez and dance partner

HIP, young movers and achievers. Rita Sanson with pals Agnes and Anna Benares

BUTCH Sarfati and Carina Cruz

BUSINESS magnate Alex Ozoa and Charlie Opinion

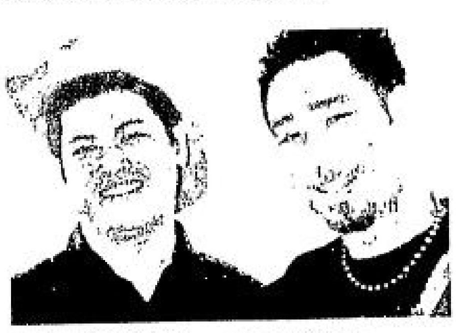
SUPER FUN Baby Benares and Marlin Gamboa

TAJ TAJANGLANGIT and Thomas Adam

CONVERSE is the choice of Jerks' drummer Aimee Marcos.

VIVACIOUS Margie Go, hotshot Converse EVP and managing director, can't say enough about the cool Converse shoes.

"UNANG Hirit's" Drew Arellano and **"Pinoy Big Brother's"** Mariel Rodriguez show their Converse top pick.


OUR *PALANGGA*, workasonic Jake Ramirez, Converse sales marketing manager; and host, *guapito* Jay Eigenmann

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Searching for the best

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

SOMETIMES, THE SIMPLEST questions about your options for healthy living are not asked, or worse, not answered.

In the course of daily living, lifestyle often demands a way of searching for what's best out there for you.

These answers to some of your questions resulted from research and are given with candor in the hope of providing just a little more enlightenment to the seeker.

Why are some of the most popular diets so high in protein? Are they safe?

There are at least two to three popular diets widely accepted by the social set. While they may seem effective, many nutritionists question their safety.

Though you will see results within two weeks with a high-protein diet, the overload may cause your kidneys to work overtime, possibly reaching a state called ketosis, raised level of ketone bodies that are natural products of metabolism. The condition has led to kidney problems in some.

Diets low in carbohydrates are probably designed for those who move less (i.e. little or no exercise). And because the body's energy comes primarily from carbs, when the body is deprived of them, the natural tendency is to produce energy from fat. Hence, weight loss. Remember that your brain's food source is glucose that comes mainly from carbs. If you go on high-protein, low-carb diet, you could be starving your brain.

There are so many vitamins in the market. How do I choose what's best for me?

Different people have different vitamin and nutritional needs. If you want something specially designed for your lifestyle and health condition, it is best to consult your doctor. However, if it's a daily vitamin regimen you want, most over-the-counter preparations are good. But since you have no way of comparing the effectiveness or potency of different supplements, follow the "something is better than nothing."

Your chosen supplement may have the following:

Vitamins—A, B complex, C, D, E, K; minerals—calcium, magnesium, chromium, iron, fluorine, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, selenium, zinc.

It is important to read labels. Know what your chosen vitamin contains.

Over and above your daily regimen, you may consider taking an antioxidant supplement containing co-enzyme Q10, alpha-lipoic acid, green tea, gingko biloba, ginseng.

What supplements would you recommend to those with active lifestyles?

Most fitness enthusiasts believe one banana before a workout is enough. You will need basic supplements of Vitamin A, B6, C, calcium, magnesium (which is lost through workout).

Looking for extended energy? Eat high nutrient foods, and some are better than others—soybeans better than peas, whole-wheat pasta better than white pasta, beets better than carrots, grapefruit better than oranges, apples or bananas.

What is the most skin-friendly whitening soap/regimen in the market today? My beauty budget is small. Is there any all-around product I can use for face and body?

Because cleanliness comes first, perhaps you should start with a basic soap product. Many would opt for baby soap which, ideally, would be gentle on the skin. However, the choice of a product would depend on your age and beauty requirements.

If it's for whitening and moisturizing, you need natural not chemical-based soap like Oil and Herbs that combines the best of pineapple and papaya. It's the new generation of anti-aging, whitening soaps in the market today.

I am hypertensive. What is the best way to prevent my attacks?

A holistic approach to your situation should address your physical, emotional and spiritual needs. Control your salt/sodium intake, exercise (sweat out the toxins), do a body-mind therapy like yoga, tai chi, qigong or seek counseling, meditate, do a relaxation regimen (massage, write in a journal, walk in the park).

Studies have proven that your emotions are directly connected to your physical body. Therefore, if you control your emotions you can also control your reaction to stress.

Love and light!

Source: "Vitamin Bible for the 21st Century," by Earl Mindell

Workshop on spa management

THE SPA PROFESSIONALS International Development Center (SPID), the first internationally recognized spa school in the Philippines, is conducting a workshop on "Professional Spa Management" May 10-11.

The workshop will cover day-to-day operations of a spa: operations, management, human resource issues, financial control, among others.

Spa Professionals is conducting the workshop to help people wanting to go into the spa business to set up facilities that are safe, ethical, professionally run and financially viable.

The center also conducts workshops on "Understanding the Spa & Wellness Industry," and "How to Set Up A Spa," among others.

"Understanding the Spa and Wellness Industry" is a four-hour course designed to help hoteliers, resort owners, architects, real-estate developers, interior designers, doctors and other individuals interested in the wellness industry have a deeper appreciation of the history of spa, the relationship between spas and wellness, business opportunities in the wellness industry, requirements of the industry, among others.

Spa Professionals also offers spa therapy courses including Anatomy and Physiology, Swedish Massage (CIBTAC), Scrubs and Wraps, Facials, Aromatherapy, Filipino Hilot and others. Call 8382170, telefax 8382195, e-mail info@spaprofessionals.net or visit www.spaprofessionals.net. Spa Professionals is on the South Superhighway in Sucat, Parañaque.

Preventing allergic reactions

HOUSE DUST AND POLLUTION can trigger reactions called allergic rhinitis.

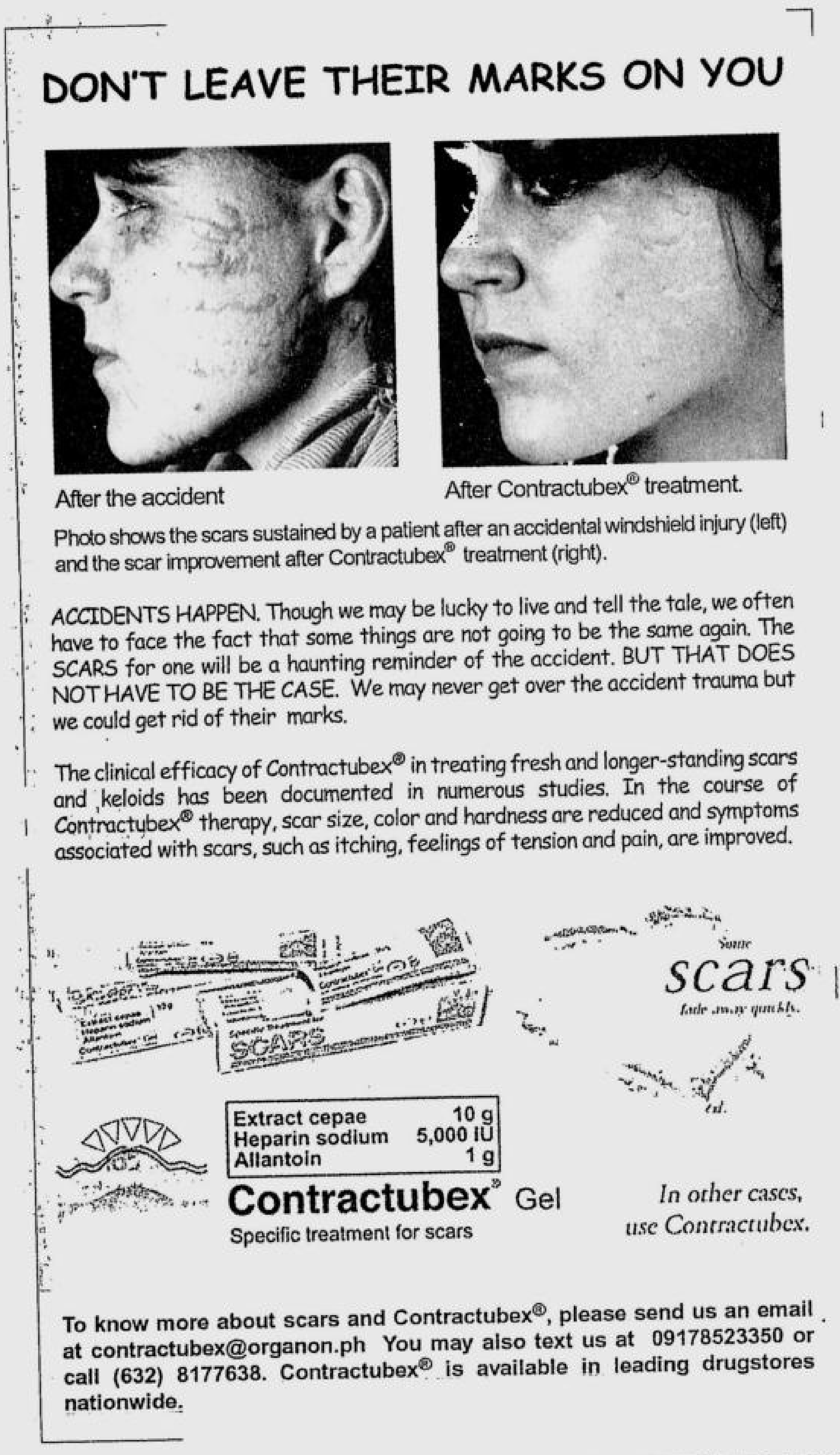
Characterized by sneezing, runny or clogged nose and itchy, watery, red eyes, it is caused by swelling in the nose lining or nasal membrane due to exposure to allergens like house dust, pollen, animal dander, or pollution.

For sexy comedienne Giselle Sanchez and actor Ricci Chan, there is only one way to avoid the inconvenience of allergic rhinitis, Diphenhydramine HCl (Benadryl AH) capsule, an antihistamine.

Antihistamine medicines are the first line of defense against allergic rhinitis. They effectively block allergens from irritating the nasal tissues.

With their busy schedules, Sanchez and Chan try to prevent asthma attacks that can slow them down by keeping Benadryl AH capsule handy. With Benadryl AH capsule, they are able to avoid the bothersome symptoms of allergic rhinitis.

If symptoms persist, consult your doctor. Read label directions carefully.



DON'T LEAVE THEIR MARKS ON YOU

After the accident

After Contractubex® treatment.

Photo shows the scars sustained by a patient after an accidental windshield injury (left) and the scar improvement after Contractubex® treatment (right).

ACCIDENTS HAPPEN. Though we may be lucky to live and tell the tale, we often have to face the fact that some things are not going to be the same again. The SCARS for one will be a haunting reminder of the accident. BUT THAT DOES NOT HAVE TO BE THE CASE. We may never get over the accident trauma but we could get rid of their marks.

The clinical efficacy of Contractubex® in treating fresh and longer-standing scars and keloids has been documented in numerous studies. In the course of Contractubex® therapy, scar size, color and hardness are reduced and symptoms associated with scars, such as itching, feelings of tension and pain, are improved.

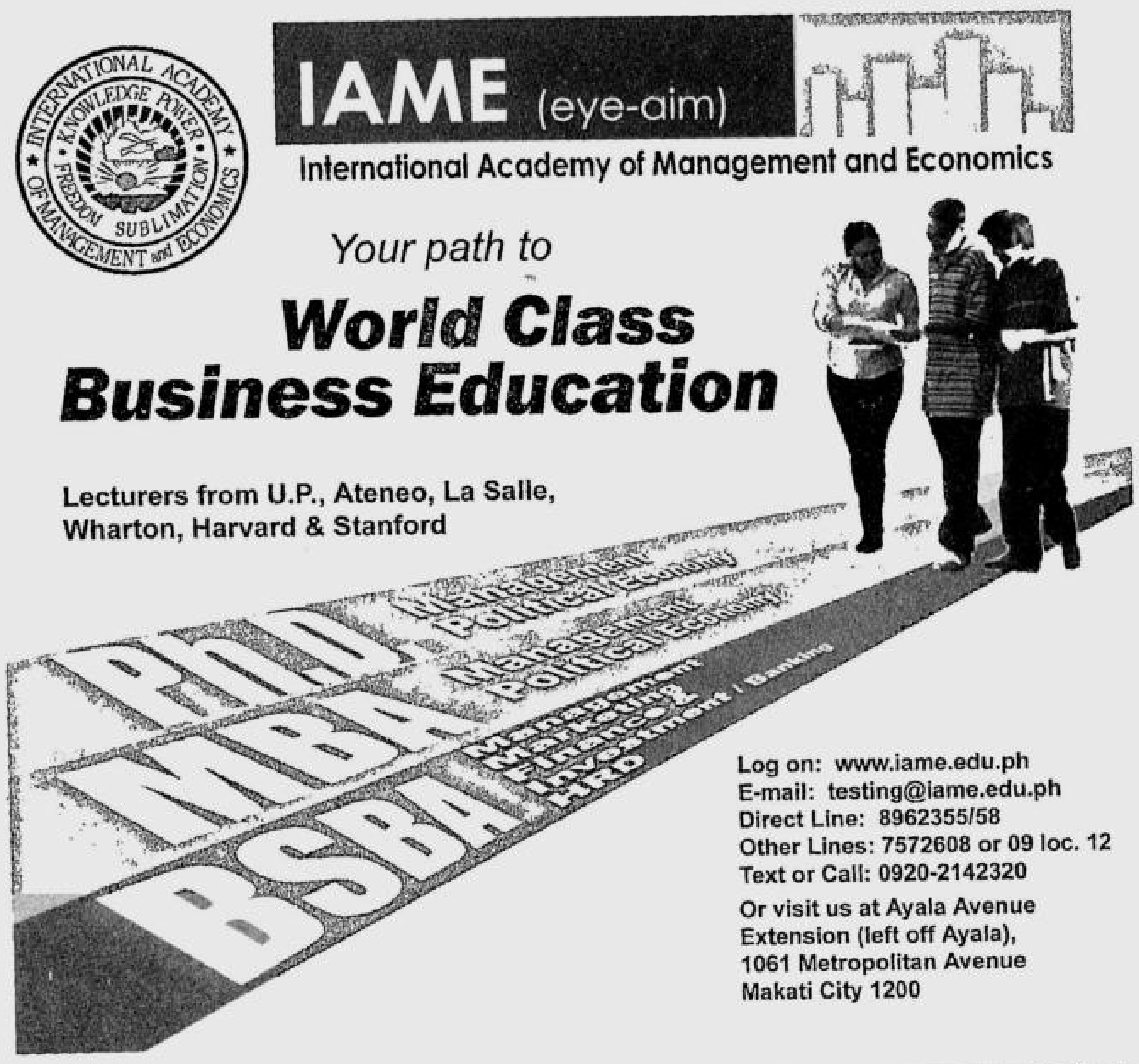
Some scars fade away quickly.

Extract cepae 10 g
Heparin sodium 5,000 IU
Allantoin 1 g

Contractubex® Gel
Specific treatment for scars

In other cases, use Contractubex.

To know more about scars and Contractubex®, please send us an email at contractubex@organon.ph You may also text us at 09178523350 or call (632) 8177638. Contractubex® is available in leading drugstores nationwide.



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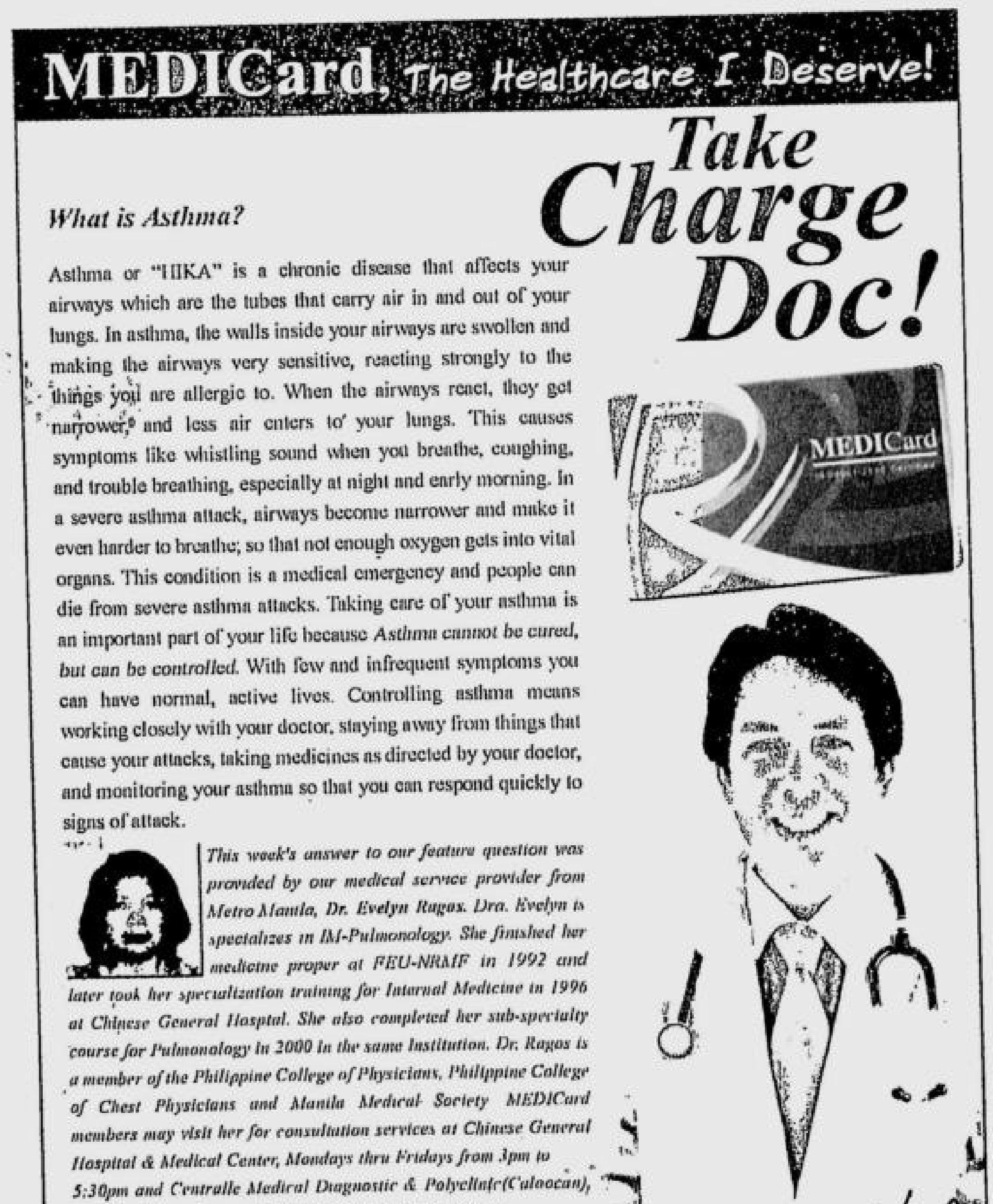


MEDICard, The Healthcare I Deserve!

Take Charge Doc!

What is Asthma?

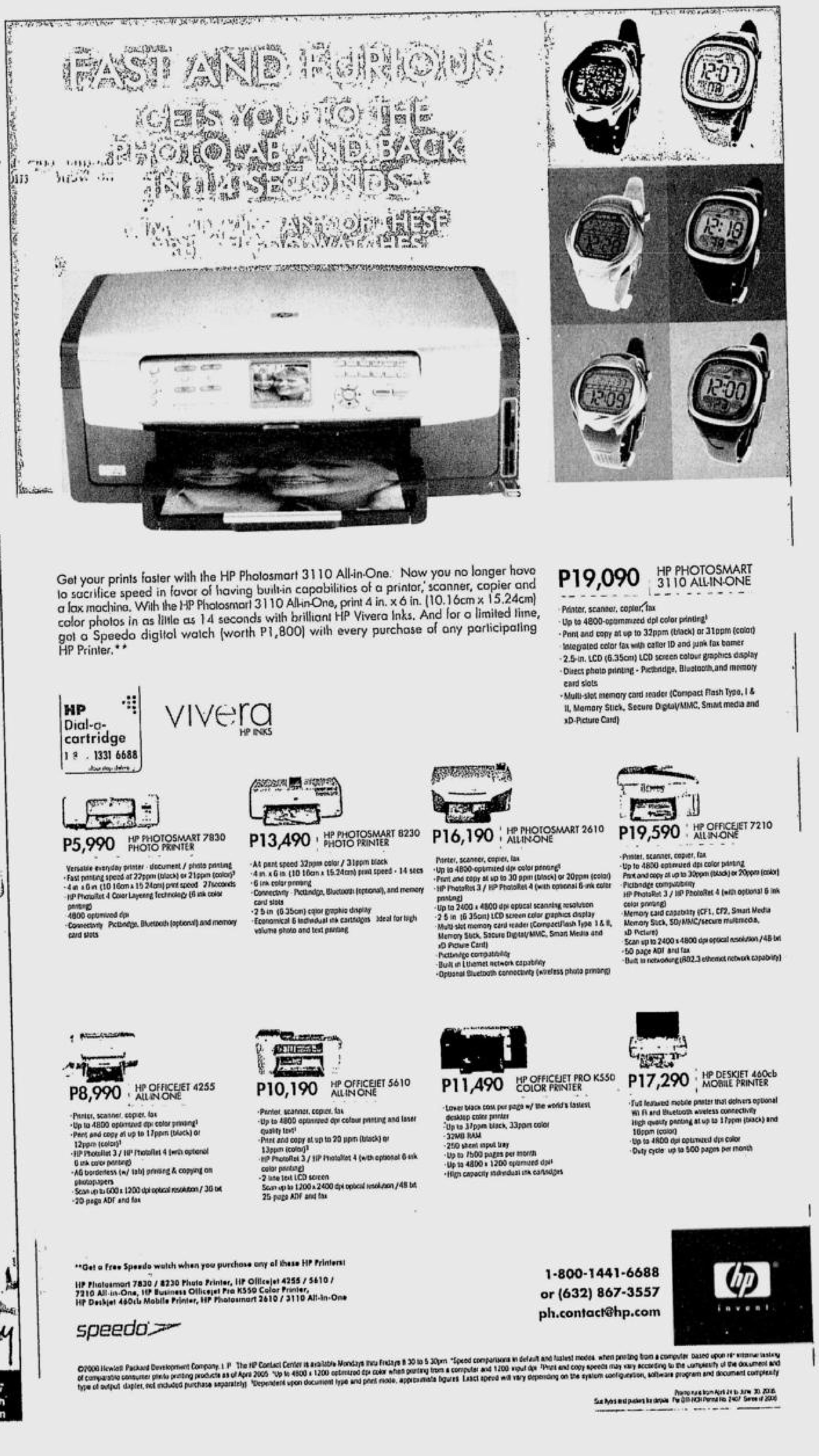
Asthma or "HIKA" is a chronic disease that affects your airways which are the tubes that carry air in and out of your lungs. In asthma, the walls inside your airways are swollen and making the airways very sensitive, reacting strongly to the things you are allergic to. When the airways react, they get narrower, and less air enters to your lungs. This causes symptoms like whistling sound when you breathe, coughing, and trouble breathing, especially at night and early morning. In a severe asthma attack, airways become narrower and make it even harder to breathe; so that not enough oxygen gets into vital organs. This condition is a medical emergency and people can die from severe asthma attacks. Taking care of your asthma is an important part of your life because *Asthma cannot be cured, but can be controlled.* With few and infrequent symptoms you can have normal, active lives. Controlling asthma means working closely with your doctor, staying away from things that cause your attacks, taking medicines as directed by your doctor, and monitoring your asthma so that you can respond quickly to signs of attack.

This week's answer to our feature question was provided by our medical service provider from Metro Manila, Dr. Evelyn Ragos. Dra. Evelyn is specializes in IM-Pulmonology. She finished her medicine proper at FEU-NRMF in 1992 and later took her specialization training for Internal Medicine in 1996 at Chinese General Hospital. She also completed her sub-specialty course for Pulmonology in 2000 in the same Institution. Dr. Ragos is a member of the Philippine College of Physicians, Philippine College of Chest Physicians and Manila Medical Society. MEDICard members may visit her for consultation services at Chinese General Hospital & Medical Center, Mondays thru Fridays from 3pm to 5:30pm and Centralle Medical Diagnostic & Polyclinic (Caloocan), Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 10am to 12noon.

Nicky

MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. Write to Dr. Nicky or E-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com for your inquiries on health matters.

MEDICard PHILIPPINES, INC.: 9th Floor Sagittarius Building H.V. dela Costa Street, Salcedo Village, Makati City 1227 Trunkline: [illegible] Fax No.: 884 5720 810 3856 Text: Key in MEDICARD and send to 2344 (Globe & Touch [illegible] Smart & Talk N Text). E-mail: inquiry@medicardphils.com Website: www.medicardphils.com



FAST AND FURIOUS GETS YOU TO THE PHOTO LAB AND BACK IN 14 SECONDS
[illegible] ANY OF THESE [illegible] WATCHES

Get your prints faster with the HP Photosmart 3110 All-in-One. Now you no longer have to sacrifice speed in favor of having built-in capabilities of a printer, scanner, copier and a fax machine. With the HP Photosmart 3110 All-in-One, print 4 in. x 6 in. (10.16cm x 15.24cm) color photos in as little as 14 seconds with brilliant HP Vivera Inks. And for a limited time, get a Speedo digital watch (worth P1,800) with every purchase of any participating HP Printer.**

P19,090 HP PHOTOSMART 3110 ALL-IN-ONE
- Printer, scanner, copier, fax
- Up to 4800-optimized dpi color printing[1]
- Print and copy at up to 32ppm (black) or 31ppm (color)
- Integrated color fax with caller ID and junk fax barrier
- 2.5-in. LCD (6.35cm) LCD screen colour graphics display
- Direct photo printing - Pictbridge, Bluetooth, and memory card slots
- Multi-slot memory card reader (Compact Flash Type, I & II, Memory Stick, Secure Digital/MMC, Smart media and xD-Picture Card)

HP Dial-a-cartridge 1 [illegible] 1331 6688

vivera HP INKS

P5,990 HP PHOTOSMART 7830 PHOTO PRINTER
- Versatile everyday printer - document / photo printing
- Fast printing speed of 22ppm (black) or 21ppm (color)[3]
- 4 in. x 6 in. (10.16cm x 15.24cm) print speed 27seconds
- HP PhotoRet 4 Color Layering Technology (6 ink color printing)
- 4800 optimized dpi
- Connectivity Pictbridge, Bluetooth (optional) and memory card slots

P13,490 HP PHOTOSMART 8230 PHOTO PRINTER
- A4 print speed 32ppm color / 31ppm black
- 4 in. x 6 in. (10.16cm x 15.24cm) print speed - 14 secs
- 6 ink color printing
- Connectivity - Pictbridge, Bluetooth (optional), and memory card slots
- 2.5 in (6.35cm) color graphic display
- Economical 6 individual ink cartridges Ideal for high volume photo and text printing

P16,190 HP PHOTOSMART 2610 ALL-IN-ONE
- Printer, scanner, copier, fax
- Up to 4800-optimized dpi color printing[2]
- Print and copy at up to 30 ppm (black) or 20ppm (color)
- HP PhotoRet 3 / HP PhotoRet 4 (with optional 6-ink color printing)
- Up to 2400 x 4800 dpi optical scanning resolution
- 2.5 in (6.35cm) LCD screen color graphics display
- Multi-slot memory card reader (CompactFlash Type 1 & II, Memory Stick, Secure Digital/MMC, Smart Media and xD Picture Card)
- Pictbridge compatibility
- Built in Ethernet network capability
- Optional Bluetooth connectivity (wireless photo printing)

P19,590 HP OFFICEJET 7210 ALL-IN-ONE
- Printer, scanner, copier, fax
- Up to 4800 optimized dpi color printing
- Print and copy at up to 30ppm (black) or 20ppm (color)
- Pictbridge compatibility
- HP PhotoRet 3 / HP PhotoRet 4 (with optional 6 ink color printing)
- Memory card capability (CF1, CF2, Smart Media Memory Stick, SD/MMC/secure multimedia, xD Picture)
- Scan up to 2400 x 4800 dpi optical resolution / 48 bit
- 50 page ADF and fax
- Built in networking (802.3 ethernet network capability)

P8,990 HP OFFICEJET 4255 ALL-IN-ONE
- Printer, scanner, copier, fax
- Up to 4800 optimized dpi color printing[1]
- Print and copy at up to 17ppm (black) or 12ppm (color)[1]
- HP PhotoRet 3 / HP PhotoRet 4 (with optional 6 ink color printing)
- A6 borderless (w/ tab) printing & copying on photopapers
- Scan up to 600 x 1200 dpi optical resolution / 30 bit
- 20 page ADF and fax

P10,190 HP OFFICEJET 5610 ALL-IN-ONE
- Printer, scanner, copier, fax
- Up to 4800 optimized dpi colour printing and laser quality text[1]
- Print and copy at up to 20 ppm (black) or 13ppm (color)[3]
- HP PhotoRet 3 / HP PhotoRet 4 (with optional 6-ink color printing)
- 2 line text LCD screen
- Scan up to 1200 x 2400 dpi optical resolution / 48 bit
- 25 page ADF and fax

P11,490 HP OFFICEJET PRO K550 COLOR PRINTER
- Lower black cost per page w/ the world's fastest desktop color printer
- Up to 37ppm black, 33ppm color
- 32MB RAM
- 250 sheet input tray
- Up to 7500 pages per month
- Up to 4800 x 1200 optimized dpi[1]
- High capacity individual ink cartridges

P17,290 HP DESKJET 460cb MOBILE PRINTER
- Full featured mobile printer that delivers optional Wi Fi and Bluetooth wireless connectivity
- High quality printing at up to 17ppm (black) and 16ppm (color)
- Up to 4800 dpi optimized dpi color
- Duty cycle up to 500 pages per month

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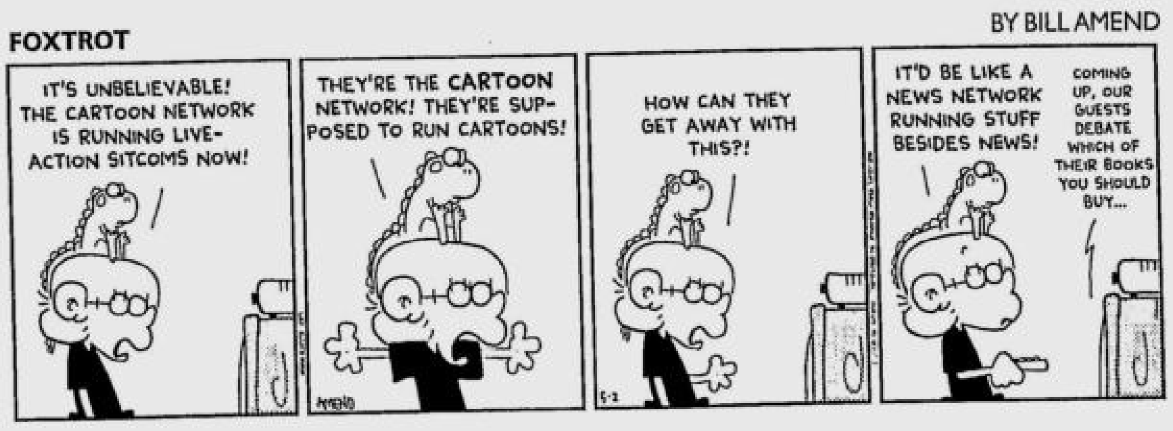
©2006 Hewlett Packard Development Company, L.P. The HP Contact Center is available Mondays thru Fridays 8:30 to 5:30pm. [1]Speed comparisons in default and fastest modes, when printing from a computer based upon [illegible] external testing of comparable consumer photo printing products as of April 2005. [2]Up to 4800 x 1200 optimized dpi color when printing from a computer and 1200 input dpi. [3]Print and copy speeds may vary according to the complexity of the document and type of output. [illegible] not included purchase separately. [4]Dependent upon document type and print mode, approximate figures. Exact speed will vary depending on the system configuration, software program and document complexity.

Promo runs from April 24 to June 30, 2006. [illegible] Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 2407 Series of 2006

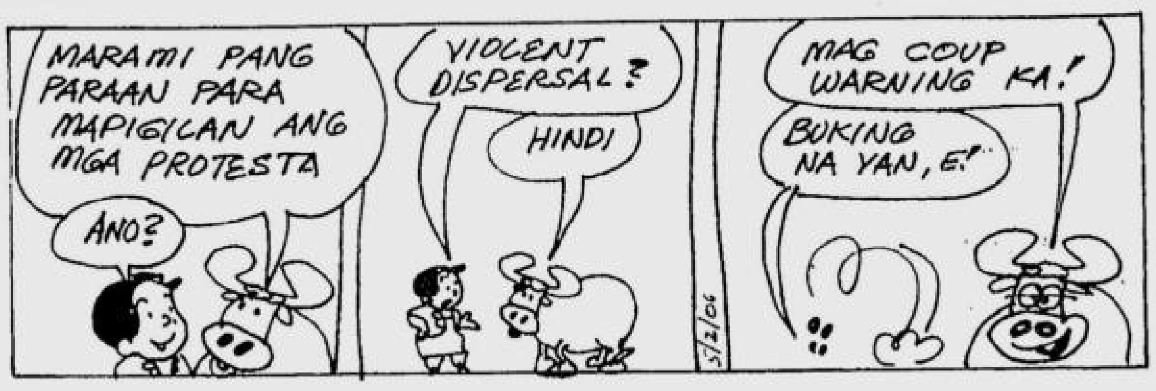
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


IT'S UNBELIEVABLE! THE CARTOON NETWORK IS RUNNING LIVE-ACTION SITCOMS NOW!
THEY'RE THE CARTOON NETWORK! THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO RUN CARTOONS!
HOW CAN THEY GET AWAY WITH THIS?!
IT'D BE LIKE A NEWS NETWORK RUNNING STUFF BESIDES NEWS!
COMING UP, OUR GUESTS DEBATE WHICH OF THEIR BOOKS YOU SHOULD BUY...
AMEND
5-2

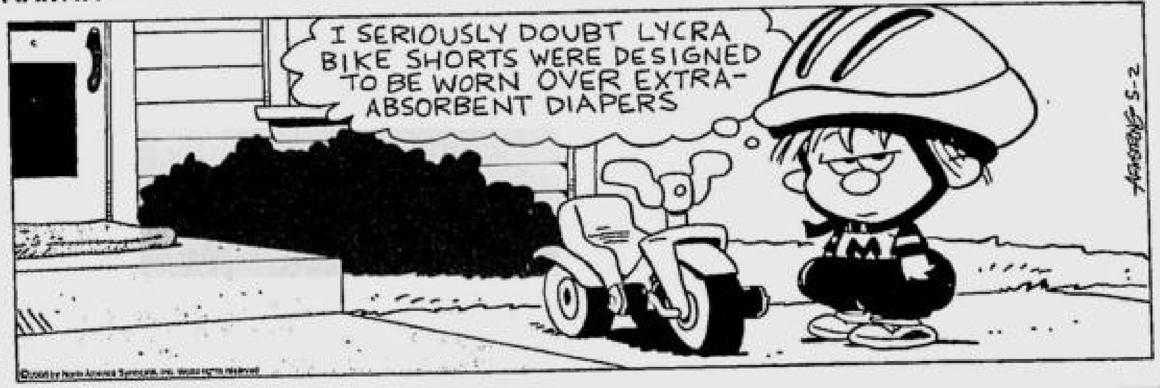
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


MARAMI PANG PARAAN PARA MAPIGILAN ANG MGA PROTESTA
ANO?
VIOLENT DISPERSAL?
HINDI
MAG COUP WARNING KA!
BUKING NA YAN, E!
5/2/06

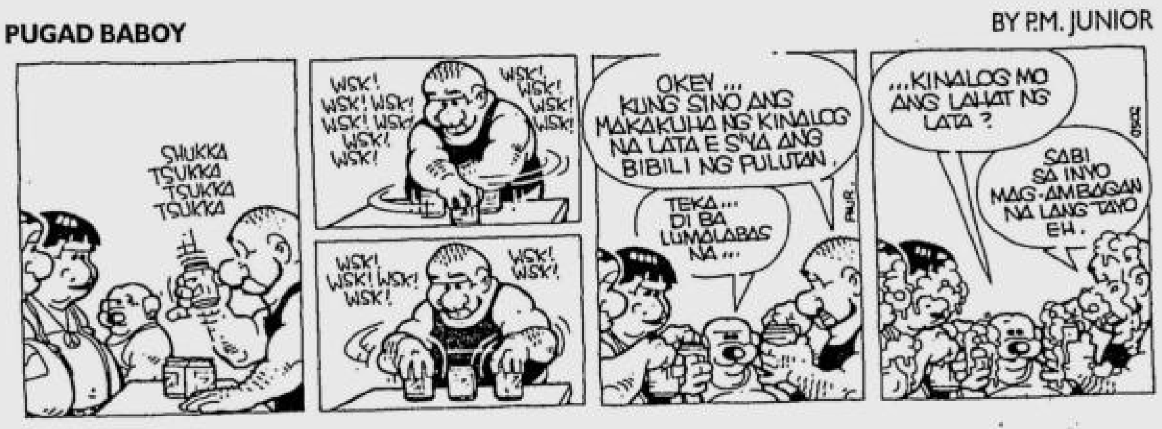
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


I SERIOUSLY DOUBT LYCRA BIKE SHORTS WERE DESIGNED TO BE WORN OVER EXTRA-ABSORBENT DIAPERS
ARMSTRONG 5-2

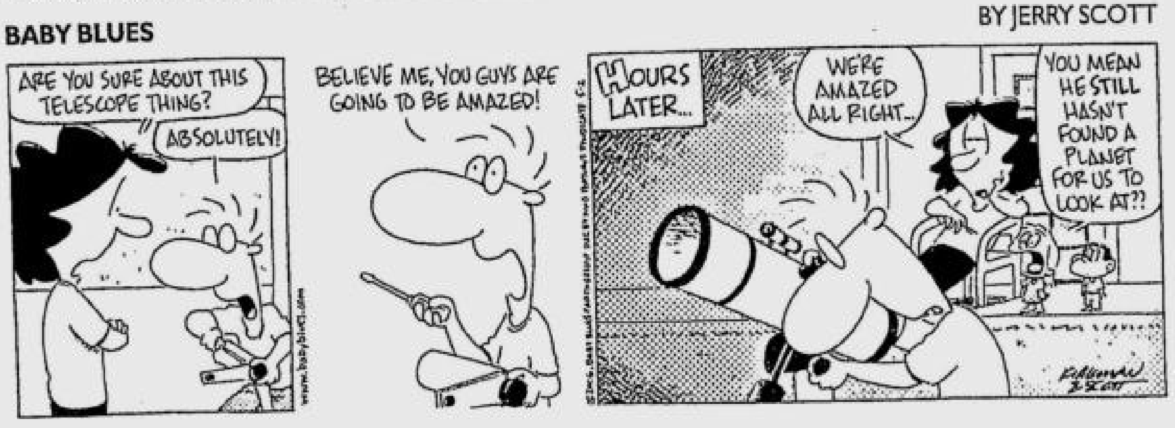
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


SHUKKA TSUKKA TSUKKA TSUKKA
WSK! WSK! WSK! WSK! WSK! WSK! WSK!
WSK! WSK! WSK! WSK!
WSK! WSK! WSK! WSK!
WSK! WSK!
OKEY ... KUNG SINO ANG MAKAKUHA NG KINALOG NA LATA E S'YA ANG BIBILI NG PULUTAN.
TEKA... DI BA LUMALABAS NA...
...KINALOG MO ANG LAHAT NG LATA?
SABI SA INYO MAG-AMBAGAN NA LANG TAYO EH.

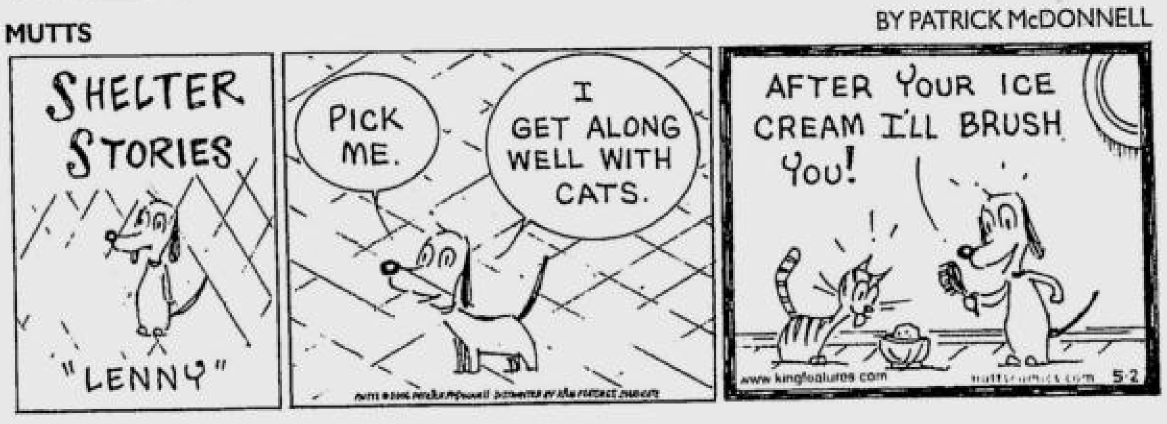
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS TELESCOPE THING?
ABSOLUTELY!
BELIEVE ME, YOU GUYS ARE GOING TO BE AMAZED!
HOURS LATER...
WE'RE AMAZED ALL RIGHT...
YOU MEAN HE STILL HASN'T FOUND A PLANET FOR US TO LOOK AT??
www.babyblues.com

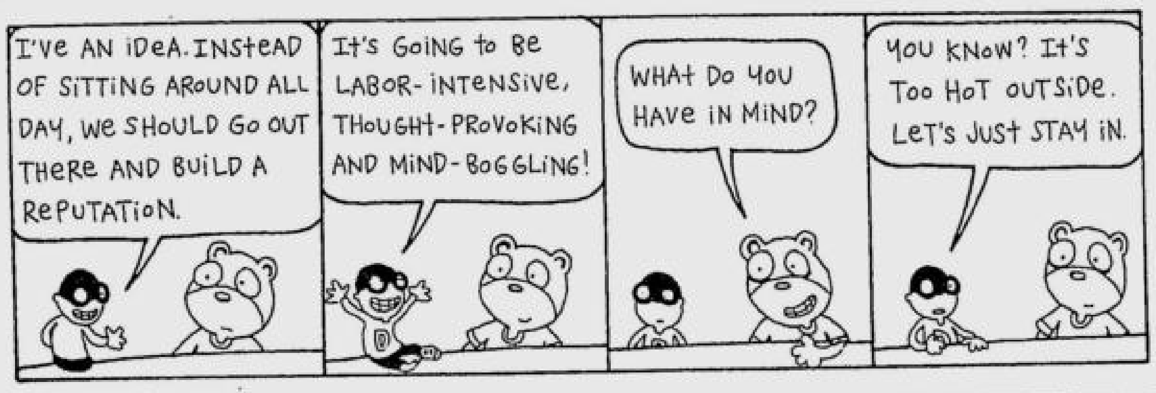
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


SHELTER STORIES
"LENNY"
PICK ME.
I GET ALONG WELL WITH CATS.
AFTER YOUR ICE CREAM I'LL BRUSH YOU!
www.kingfeatures.com
5-2

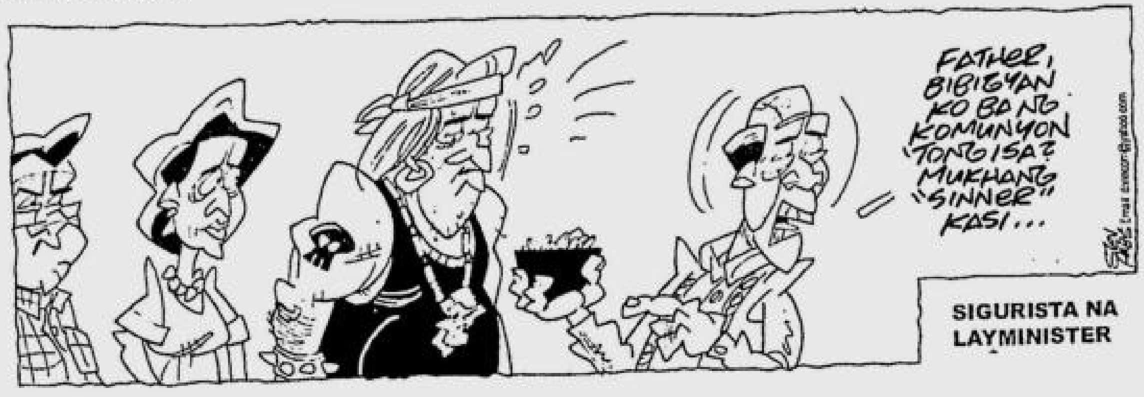
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


I'VE AN IDEA. INSTEAD OF SITTING AROUND ALL DAY, WE SHOULD GO OUT THERE AND BUILD A REPUTATION.
IT'S GOING TO BE LABOR-INTENSIVE, THOUGHT-PROVOKING AND MIND-BOGGLING!
WHAT DO YOU HAVE IN MIND?
YOU KNOW? IT'S TOO HOT OUTSIDE. LET'S JUST STAY IN.

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


FATHER, BIBIGYAN KO BA NG KOMUNYON TONG ISA? MUKHANG "SINNER" KASI...

SIGURISTA NA LAYMINISTER

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're very practical and enterprising. Many of you are self-employed. You're attracted to the arts, but you want to make money. You have excellent taste. You're generous with those you love. You see harmony in all your relationships. Expect your life to shift around age 49, when you want more emotional closeness with family. This year is wonderfully social. Enjoy!

Birthdate of: Christine Baranski, actress; Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, actor; David Beckham, soccer player.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You might find yourself obsessed with a particular idea today. Or, in turn, you might encounter somebody else who is very intense and obsessive. (Yikes!)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Your research abilities are marvelous today. You see the subtext of everything. No one can pull the wool over your eyes. You have the mind of a detective today.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Discussions with friends will be deep and probing. You will not linger with superficial conversations. Oh no, you want the straight goods. (The real dirt.)

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Bosses, parents, teachers and authority figures are very demanding today. Or you might meet an overpowering, intimidating person. (Be polite.)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You will adore studying any kind of subject to learn something new. Your mind is hungry to get at the truth of anything. You don't want superficial, Band-Aid explanations. You want the facts!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Quite likely, you'll uncover some secrets today. They could be related to shared property or the earnings or wealth of your partner or a friend. You might learn how much money someone else makes.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): A close friend wants you to put your cards on the table. If you don't want to, you don't have to. Just because people are curious doesn't mean you have to satisfy them.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You have moneymaking ideas and new approaches for improvements at work. You might also see ways to improve your own health.

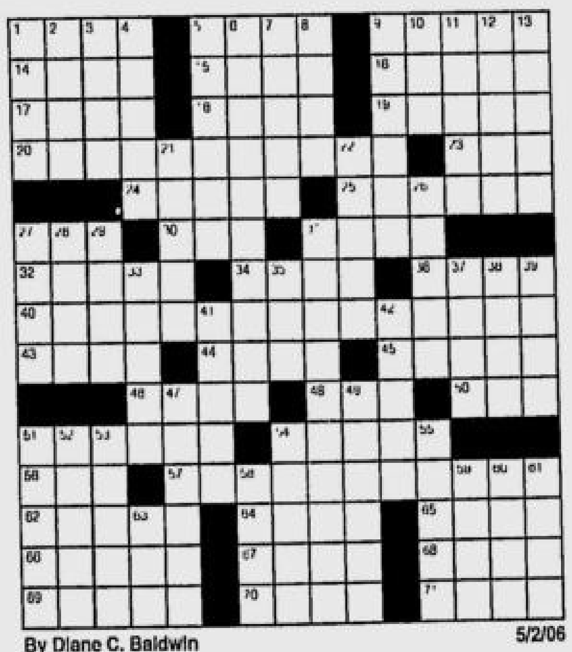
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You'll enjoy reading murder mysteries, seeing whodunits or playing any kind of mysterious game today. You feel a bit like Sherlock Holmes, but in a playful way.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Family discussions might become tedious, like a stuck record. Someone is like a dog with a bone; this person won't let go! Be patient. Maybe it's time to talk turkey?

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You can't get a certain idea out of your mind. Or maybe you have a song stuck in your head, like "Six Days on the Road."

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Be careful how you spend money today, because you might feel extremely compelled to do something. This is not the ideal frame of mind in which to part with your hard-earned cash, is it?

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Diane C. Baldwin
Columbia, MD

5/2/06

ACROSS

1 Industrial arts class
5 Winter Palace ruler
9 Ruffian cadres
14 Red hot flower?
15 Imprint clearly
16 Met production
17 __-Ude, Russia
18 Roster listing
19 Porkers' pads
20 Happy retirement
23 Boastful talk
24 Pseudonym
25 Four score
27 Sharp turn
30 Ballpark fig.
31 Family man
32 Soulful Hayes
34 Throw
36 Irritate
40 Eve, often
43 Court proceeding
44 Writer Kingsley
45 Nonclerics
46 French cleric
48 Healthful getaway
50 Told ya!
51 Photographer's workshop
54 Bout site
56 Triumphed over
57 Fond memories subject
62 Slightly inclined
64 London lockup
65 Neck of the woods
66 Barbecue site
67 Soil sweetener
68 Medicinal tablet
69 Alarm's disruption
70 Once, once
71 Magnetic recording

DOWN

1 Haul off and belt
2 Sign of saintliness
3 Nearly round
4 Bamboo-eating mammal
5 Wimbledon game
6 Kind of mom
7 High spots
8 Flightless bird
9 Dish the dirt
10 Suited for
11 Pony's comment
12 Eminent
13 Impudent
21 Chosen ones
22 King's domain
26 Third Greek letter
27 Vitamin pill mineral
28 Laos locale
29 Prevents from speaking
31 Reporters' hangouts
33 In the lead
35 Mentalist Geller
37 Bird in hieroglyphics
38 Gala event
39 Soleil Moon _ of "Punky Brewster"
41 No-no
42 African antelope
47 Circus tent
49 BB, e.g.
51 Trades
52 Receipt number
53 Band together
54 Red of oil well fire-fighting fame
55 Fit to suit
58 Lecherous look
59 "Norma" song
60 High cry
61 Mall enticement
63 Tell it like it isn't

Monday's Puzzle Solved

S	E	A	B	E	L	■	H	A	R	P	■	E	M	T
E	N	S	O	U	L	■	A	L	A	R	■	L	O	O
G	O	I	N	G	F	O	R	T	H	E	G	O	L	D
A	L	A	■	E	M	C	E	E	■	Q	U	I	T	O
■	■	■	G	N	A	T	■	■	A	U	S	■	■	■
O	N	C	E	I	N	A	L	I	F	E	T	I	M	E
P	O	O	L	F	■	■	A	R	A	L	■	S	A	N
A	H	A	S	■	B	A	S	E	R	■	P	E	N	D
R	O	T	■	R	A	V	I	■	■	A	E	R	I	E
T	W	I	C	E	B	A	K	E	D	B	R	E	A	D
■	■	■	O	D	E	■	■	D	O	S	E	■	■	■
I	N	F	E	R	■	S	A	N	Y	O	■	S	A	L
S	O	L	D	O	U	T	B	A	L	L	G	A	M	E
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K	I	X	■	E	T	R	E	■	S	E	R	E	N	A

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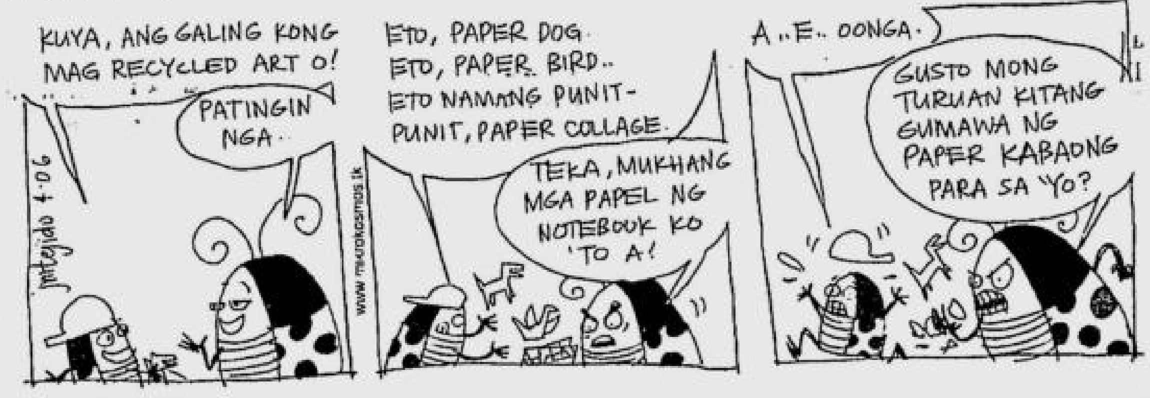
5/2/06

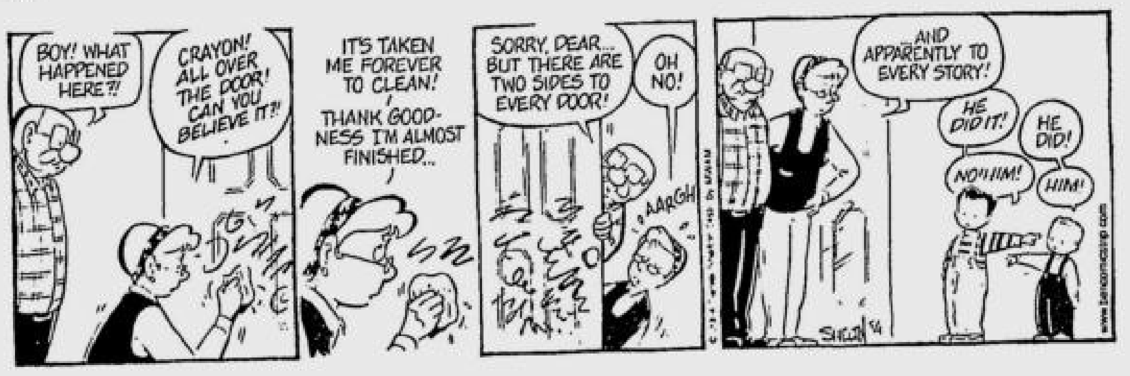
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


KUYA, ANG GALING KONG MAG RECYCLED ART O!
PATINGIN NGA.
jmtejido 4·06
ETO, PAPER DOG.
ETO, PAPER BIRD..
ETO NAMANG PUNIT-PUNIT, PAPER COLLAGE.
TEKA, MUKHANG MGA PAPEL NG NOTEBOOK KO 'TO A!
A..E.. OONGA.
GUSTO MONG TURUAN KITANG GUMAWA NG PAPER KABAONG PARA SA 'YO?

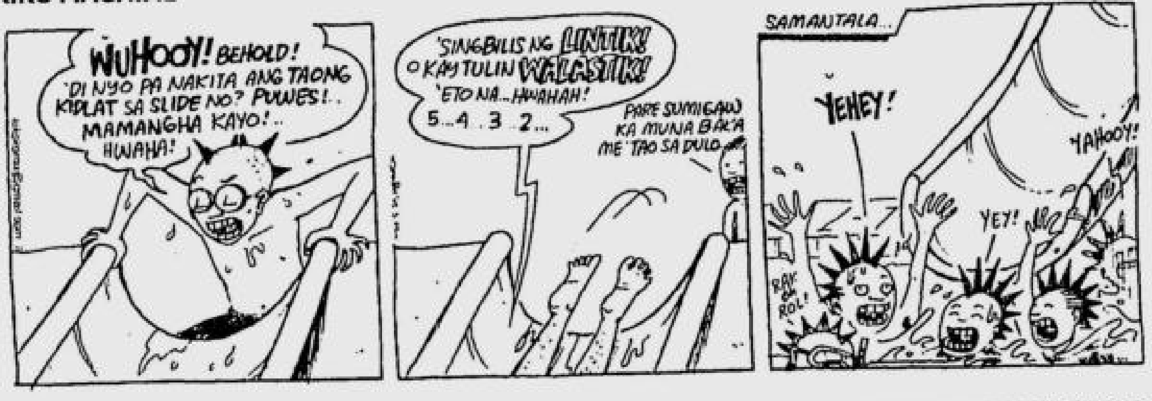
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


BOY! WHAT HAPPENED HERE?!
CRAYON! ALL OVER THE DOOR! CAN YOU BELIEVE IT?!
IT'S TAKEN ME FOREVER TO CLEAN!
THANK GOODNESS I'M ALMOST FINISHED...
SORRY, DEAR... BUT THERE ARE TWO SIDES TO EVERY DOOR!
OH NO!
AARGH
AND APPARENTLY TO EVERY STORY!
HE DID IT!
HE DID!
NO!! HIM!
HIM!

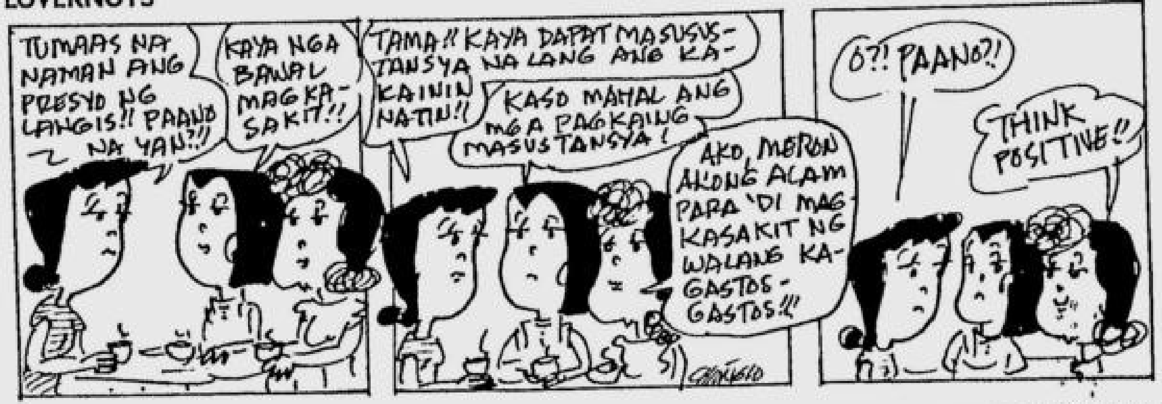
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


WUHOOY! BEHOLD! 'DI NYO PA NAKITA ANG TAONG KIDLAT SA SLIDE NO? PUWES!.. MAMANGHA KAYO!.. HWAHA!
'SINGBILIS NG LINTIK! O KAY TULIN WALASTIK! 'ETO NA...HWAHAH! 5..4..3..2...
PARE SUMIGAW KA MUNA BAK'A ME' TAO SA DULO
SAMANTALA...
YEHEY!
YAHOOY!
YEY!

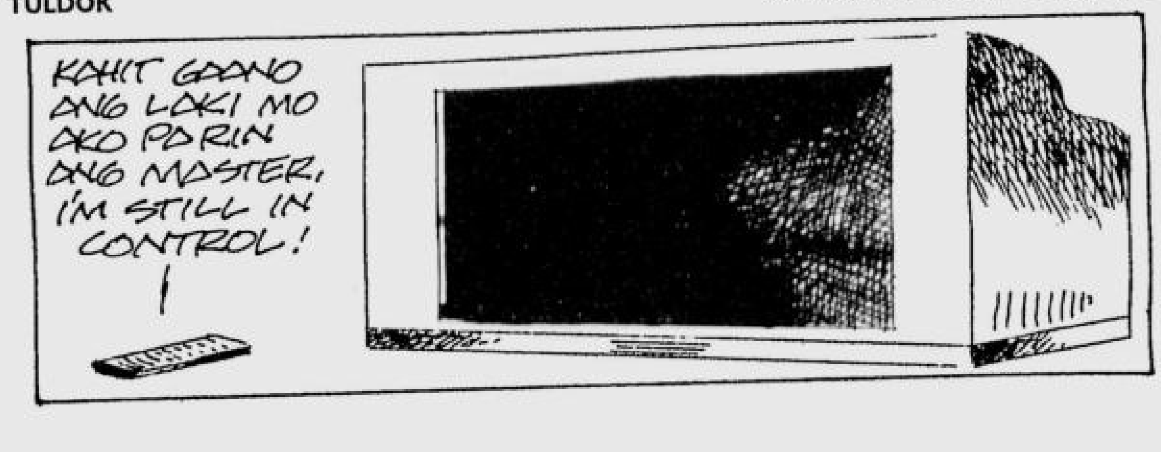
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


TUMAAS NA NAMAN ANG PRESYO NG LANGIS!! PAANO NA YAN?!!
KAYA NGA BAWAL MAGKASAKIT!!
TAMA!! KAYA DAPAT MASUSTANSYA NA LANG ANG KAKAININ NATIN!!
KASO MAHAL ANG MGA PAGKAING MASUSTANSYA!
AKO, MERON AKONG ALAM PARA 'DI MAGKASAKIT NG WALANG KAGASTOS-GASTOS!!
O?! PAANO?!
THINK POSITIVE!!

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


KAHIT GAANO ANG LAKI MO AKO PA RIN ANG MASTER, I'M STILL IN CONTROL!

Life-altering encounter with MS

By Anne A. Jambora

NEUROLOGIST Dr. Luis Damian, Schering regional product manager for Asia-Pacific James Alexander, Schering Philippine medical director Luis Abola

DR. ANGEL VILLAfuerte used to be full of zip. She was active in church and community activities, and swam regularly as part of her health regimen.

Only 24 then, she had a budding career in dentistry. Then, one day, her lower right leg went numb.

The sensation came and went until it crawled up to her waist. A medical diagnosis found she had multiple sclerosis (MS). Almost immediately, the life she knew was gone.

Now 41 and wheelchair-bound, Villafuerte lives with the horrors of MS. She talks of ambulant days marred by her suddenly going blind while making her way down a flight of stairs, causing her to slip. Of the time she locked herself up in her house for a year and, when she finally gathered the courage to step out with a cane on each hand, children sneered at her awkward gait. Or—even worse—of how adults intentionally knock her down just to see her fall to the ground.

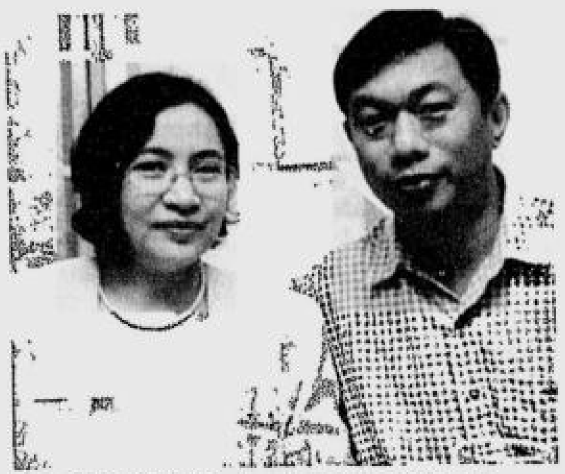
Undiagnosed

And Villafuerte is not alone in her ordeal. At the St. Luke's Medical Center (SLMC) in Quezon City, an average of 15 patients are diagnosed with MS each year. An even greater number of cases probably remain undiagnosed.

Worldwide, about 2.5 million people suffer from MS, with women twice more likely than men to be afflicted.

MS is defined as a potentially debilitating chronic disease affecting the central nervous system (CNS). Its early symptoms are experienced between ages 20 and 40. The CNS consists of the brain and the spinal cord.

MS is an auto-immune disease, meaning the body's own immune system attacks the body like it is a foreign substance. The body responds by releasing antibodies and white blood cells against the proteins in the myelin sheath in the brain and spinal cord. This action causes inflammation and injury to the sheath and the nerves. The damage blocks or slows nerve signals.



DR. ANGEL Villafuerte with husband Joseph

> Symptoms seem to be minor and ignored as just the result of everyday stress

Sclerosis is from the Latin word meaning "scar." In the case of MS, multiple scars or plaques are found in the brain or spinal column. Depending on severity and where the plaques are located in the brain and spinal column, MS can affect vision, memory, motion, speech, balance, hearing. Hence many MS patients lose muscle coordination, strength, vision and sensation.

Symptoms include dizziness, fatigue, double or blurring of vision, numbness or weakness in one or more limbs, usually on one side or at the lower half of the body, tingling or painful sensations in numb areas, electric-shock sensations during head movements. The symptoms are seemingly minor and ignored as just the result of everyday stress.

"These are neurological symptoms (but) people tend to [dismiss] them. [Many] doctors treat them symptomatically but never really get the diagnosis," said Dr. Luis Abola, medical director of Schering Philippine Corp.

MS varies in severity. Dr. Hans Ludwig F. Damien, neurologist at the Institute of Neurosciences at the SLMC, said 10 percent of cases do not go beyond the mild state. For other patients, however, MS can result in permanent disability. They may develop paralysis, difficulty to concentrate, forgetfulness, slurred speech, muscle stiffness or spasticity, bladder and bowel movement problems.

Unfortunately, the causes of MS are still not known. Although it is not strictly hereditary, a person has a 2 percent chance of acquiring the disease if a parent is affected. Geographical factors affect incidence. The disease is more prevalent in temperate climates, and in areas farther away from the equator.

No cure

So far, there is no cure for MS. Damage caused by MS is irreversible and no drug has been found to prevent permanent disability. Treatments, such as the administration beneath the skin of interferon beta-1b (Betaferon), can relieve symptoms or modify the course of the disease by decreasing the frequency and severity of relapses, and slowing down its progression. But the treatment is for life.

"Interferon beta-1b is like a cell messenger that affects the targeted cells only. In a 16-year study, 150,000 have benefited from this treatment," says James Alexander, Schering regional product manager for Asia-Pacific.

It was best to start treatment early, Alexander said, as damage occurred even at the earliest stage of the disease, way before permanent symptoms of disabilities appeared. Abola said the administration of interferon beta-1b had yielded definite benefits, significantly reducing by up to 50 percent MS symptoms and delaying the onset of the disease by almost one year, improving the patients' quality of life.

The interferon beta-1b is reputedly the only drug that treats the actual disease, not just the symptoms.

Alexander added that safety and drug tolerability of interferon beta-1b was 80 percent: "It is very safe with no unforeseen side effects in the long run. In fact, the longer you take it the better the drugs take effect." Flu-like symptoms may occur during the first three months of treatment.

Villafuerte was diagnosed in November with secondary progressive MS, a condition that will cause progressive disability within 10 years of its initial diagnosis. She was already bedridden when she took interferon beta-1b. After using the drug, however, she said she was able to spend Christmas seated on a wheelchair, something she thought she would still be able to do. Today, she's able to stand up again.

"The physical waste that comes with MS is terrifying, but I continue to fight for my life," Villafuerte said.

Schering launched recently Compassion (tel. 0917-8237267), a 24-hour counseling through home visit or by phone for MS patients struggling with emotional trauma. It also provides referrals to support groups and community agencies, and provides educational resources.

E-mail the author at ajambora@inquirer.com.ph

Practical tips to control portion sizes

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

DID YOU KNOW THAT CONSUMING AS FEW as 100 extra calories per day—the amount in 10 American-size french fries—can lead to a 10-pound weight gain in a year? This is why nutritionist Catherine Reade says learning to control portion sizes is crucial to lifelong weight management.

However, she warns that obsessively counting calories and measuring your food before you eat is not healthy. In her article, "Less is More," in the Idea Health & Fitness Source Magazine, she gives practical tips which you can use while eating at home, eating out and snacking.

Home cooking

- Eating breakfast helps control your appetite. Studies show breakfast eaters consume fewer calories throughout the day.
- Start meals with fiber-rich fruits or vegetables so you are not as hungry for higher-calorie food.
- Reade recommends taking the time to measure a teaspoon or tablespoon of oil to see what it looks like in the pan. That way, in the future, you will not be pouring too much.
- Reade says serving foods family-style in the middle of the table makes it too easy to take second and third helpings. Try putting the serving bowls in the kitchen or on a side table a distance away from the dining table.
- To visualize what portions on your plate should look like, Reade suggests using the "plate model" method. One-half of the plate should be filled with vegetables, one-quarter with grains (like rice) and the remaining one-quarter with meat, fish, eggs, tofu or legumes (like *monggo*). Add a fruit on the side and you are good to go.
- Reade calls using smaller plates a psychologically powerful way to decrease portion sizes without feeling deprived.

Eating out

The following tips apply to both fast-food outlets and fine-dining establishments.

- Start each meal with a big glass of water. Request for refills throughout the meal, says Reade, because water fills you up without adding any calories, plus it's free.
- If you know you'll be having steak for dinner, says Reade, choose light fare for lunch—for example, a turkey sandwich with lettuce, tomato and mustard and a fruit for dessert. In our Filipino setting, this would be similar to having chicken *tinola* for lunch because you are going to have crispy *pata* for dinner.
- Take the time to ask how selections from the menu are prepared, suggests Reade. You can also make a special request for a low-calorie meal. For example, ask that steamed vegetables replace a side order of baked potato.
- In fast-food restaurants, Reade warns that, although the biggest portions appear to give you the best value, resist and opt for the smallest burger or the plain grilled-chicken sandwich.
- When in doubt, order simple dishes. Saucy foods contain more calories than foods that are simply baked or grilled.
- Order salad dressing and sauces on the side to control the amount of fat you consume.
- Reade reminds us that like all fried foods, french fries contain excessive amounts of fat. She says if you must indulge yourself, order the smallest size.
- If you adore crusty bread, go for it, Reade says, but round out your meal with a salad and fruit cocktail. She also suggests skipping the appetizers and bread and butter if you've got your heart set on having a large entrée.
- If portions are big, share an order or take half home. When your meal arrives, ask for a takeout box immediately, says Reade. Put away half your meal before you even start.

Snacking

Reade says many people believe they should avoid snacking when they are watching their food intake. Actually, she explains, a healthy snack once or twice a day between meals can help ward off hunger and prevent binges. Once again, she points out that the key is to choose the right snack and then eat it in moderation.

- Snacking on fruits and vegetables is an easy way to eat your minimum five-a-day requirement.
- When eating your snack, do just that—eat. Reade explains that watching television or reading a book while you eat leads to mindless munching and excess calories. Other experts say you don't even feel satisfied because your mind is not concentrating on the flavor and texture of the snack.

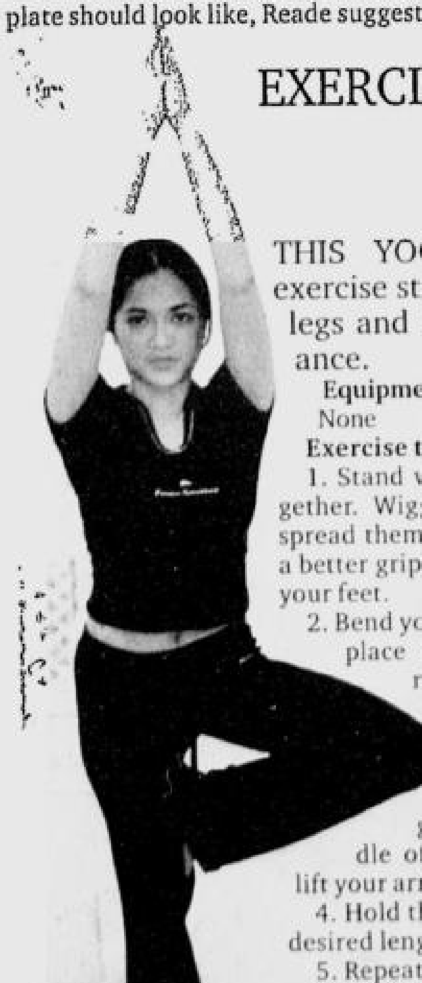
I agree with Reade that when you indulge in treats, enjoy each and every bite. Stop feeling guilty because you are eating supposedly "bad" food. She points out that eating low-fat chocolate cookies is often unsatisfying, even if you eat the whole box. Choose smaller quantities of the real thing and savor the flavor. Amen to that!

- Reade warns that buying chips and cookies in bulk usually means eating them in equally bulky portion sizes. If you buy in bulk to save money, divide the chips or cookies into small plastic containers and store them away for future use. Just don't do this when you are hungry.
- Reade says nuts are rich in fiber and protein and are a superior alternative to chips. It's true that they are high in fat but a handful of nuts can go a long way in sustaining a feeling of fullness. She says you just have to remember to keep each portion to 1 or 2 ounces (about 10-20 nuts).

Visit www.tinajuanfitness.info

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

The tree



THIS YOGA-INSPIRED exercise strengthens the legs and improves balance.

Equipment:

None

Exercise technique:

1. Stand with your feet together. Wiggle your toes to spread them apart so you get a better grip on the floor with your feet.
2. Bend your right knee and place the sole of your right foot on the inner thigh of your left leg.
3. Place your palms together in the middle of your chest then lift your arms overhead.
4. Hold the position for the desired length of time.
5. Repeat on the other side.

Performance tips:

1. Avoid pushing the sole of the foot into the inner thigh because this will throw your hips and spine out of alignment. Instead pull up tall so that the top of your hipbones is level.
2. If keeping your palms together overhead bothers your shoulders, keep your arms at chest level or keep your arms apart overhead.
3. If you have never done this exercise, here are several ways to modify it going from easier to harder:
   - a. Place the ball of your right foot on the floor beside your left foot; arms at chest level.
   - b. Lift the right foot a few inches off the floor and hold it there; arms at chest level.
   - c. Lift the right knee in front of you at waist level; arms at chest level or overhead.
4. Inhale and exhale through your nose. Breathe slowly and deeply.

Repetitions:

One breath equals an inhalation and an exhalation. Do three to five breaths per side.

Speeding up time

THE TIMEX ABT (Altimeter, Thermometer, Barometer) can track the current, highest and accumulated altitude; predict climate conditions for the next four to six hours; measure barometric pressure and current temperature. It can even display information, graph-form. The usual nifty Timex features are all in: Indiglo nightlight, chronograph, countdown timer and five sets of alarms.

THE JET Digital sport watch, from the CXG Series, and the Pride Digital sport watch are both water-resistant and can keep track of time in two time zones. Both also have countdown timers; extra-large displays; chronographs with lap timer; and amplified alarms.

SPEEDO'S Beach Professional Tide watch has a tide indicator that tells you the tidal flow on the beach of your choice, plus dual time, chronograph, alarm, countdown timer, and 12-hour or 24-hour display with minutes, seconds, month, date and day.

THE LATEST WATCHES from America's No. 1 sports watch, Timex, and the top water sports brand, Speedo, present watches that can keep up with your activities this summer.

Speedo's Reflex watch is high sporty fashion and comes in the funkiest colors of the season, with an aluminum bezel, a 1/100 chronograph, amplified alarm, calendar display of day and month/date, and your choice of a 12- or 24-hour format.

The Ladies' Swim analogue watch has precision diamond cut hands and stainless steel bezel that complement its streamline design, plus it is water resistant (up to 50 m).

For those who engage in sports, there is Timex Expedition E-tide/E-Temp, which not only gives you the temperature but also keeps track of the tides.

Then for the serious water lovers, Timex has the Reef Gear diver style watch and the Expedition diver's style watch. Both have a unique underwater Indiglo nightlight activation, glow-in-the-dark hands and zero-marker timing ring which are easily readable. They are also shock-resistant up to 200 m.

Timex is available at Timex stores and kiosks. Speedo is available at Speedo outlets and selected department stores. Both watch brands are available at all Watch Republic outlets.

In defense of 'The Da Vinci Code'

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

DAN BROWN'S HUGELY SUCCESSFUL and controversial novel, "The Da Vinci Code" (40 million copies sold), has received a lot of flak lately, mainly from the conservative Catholic church and her apologists.

They believe (falsely, of course) that the book undermines Christianity and may lead astray the faithful.

According to one critic, a historian named James Hitchcock (as quoted in the book "The Da Vinci Hoax," by Olson and Miesel):

" 'The Da Vinci Code' can be viewed as an ephemeral artifact of popular culture, but its immense sales ensure that it will have influence on people who never read serious books. Brown has found a formula for becoming rich: sex, sensationalism, feminism, anti-Catholicism and the occult. But it is also obvious that he sincerely hates Christianity and sees himself as engaged in an anti-crusade. The culture is ripe for such a debased book, so that even professing Christians are being seduced by it."

What is obvious to me in the above quotation is not that Brown "sincerely hates Christianity" but that Hitchcock is biased in his opinions, which is not expected of a historian.

What really irks blind followers of Christianity and its Medieval-thinking defenders about the novel is clearly stated in "The Da Vinci Hoax":

" 'The Da Vinci Code' challenges beliefs that are central to Christianity: the celibacy and divinity of Jesus, the place of the apostles and the purpose of the Church. The novel insists that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene and had children, that Mary Magdalene—not Peter—was the head apostle, that Catholic Church has kept these 'facts' hidden through force and terror, and that Jesus was not truly divine but merely a good man 'deified' by Emperor Constantine in AD 325."

Facts

The fact is Brown's book is fiction. He himself says so. The only things Brown claims to be factual in his book, as he himself states before the story begins, are the following:

- "The Priory of Sion, a European secret society founded in 1099
- "The Opus Dei, a deeply devout Catholic sect that has just completed construction of a US$47 million national headquarters at 243 Lexington Ave., New York
- "All descriptions of artwork, architecture, documents and secret rituals"

Not one of the reviews critical of the book published in the local press ever mentioned what Brown himself said about his intentions and his work. So, for a change, let's hear from the author himself.

In an interview that appeared in Evolve Magazine (Vol. 3, No. 1) published by Bodhi Tree Bookstore in Los Angeles, Brown answers the following questions:

Q and A

What made you decide to tackle a controversial subject?

"Strangely, I don't think I ever actively 'decided' to tackle a controversial topic. I chose this topic for personal reasons—primarily as an exploration of my own faith and my own ideas about religion. I believe that one of the reasons the book has become controversial is that religion is a very hard thing to discuss in quantitative terms. I consider myself a student of many religions. The more I learn, the more questions I have. Deciding to write about this topic was simply part of my own personal quest for understanding."

How did you get all the inside information for this book?

"Most of the information is not 'inside' as it seems. The secret described in the novel has been chronicled for centuries, so there are thousands of sources to draw from. In addition, I was surprised how eager historians were to share their expertise with me. One academic told me her enthusiasm for 'The Da Vinci Code' was based in part on her hope that this ancient mystery would be unveiled to a wider audience."

Has anyone in organized religion come out in support of your novel?

"Yes, many people in organized religion have come out in support of this novel and, of course, many have come out in opposition as well.

"The opposition generally comes from the strictest Christian thinkers who feel the idea of married Jesus serves to undermine his divinity. While I don't agree with this interpretation, this is immaterial because the dialogue itself is a deeply empowering and positive force for everyone involved.

"Suddenly, enormous numbers of people are passionately debating important philosophical topics and, regardless of the personal conclusions that each of us draws, the debate can only help to strengthen our understanding of our own faith.

"Much of the positive response I get from within organized religion comes from nuns (who write to thank me for pointing out that they have sacrificed their entire lives to the Church and are still considered 'unfit' to serve behind the altar).

"I have also heard from hundreds of enthusiastic priests. While many of them disagree with some of the ideas in the novel, they are thrilled that their parishioners are eager to discuss religion.

"Fr. John Sewell of St. John's Episcopal Church in Memphis stated it particularly eloquently in the press, saying: 'This [novel] is not a threat. This is an opportunity. We are called to creatively engage the culture and this is what I want to do. I think Dan Brown has done me a favor. He's letting me talk about things that matter."

Golf tournament set May 3-6

A BRAND-NEW TOYOTA INNOVA AND A five-day, four-night luxury cruise to Baja Mexico for two courtesy of Royal Carribean, are up for grabs in the 2006 Belle Cup Golf Tournament, May 3-6.

Cruise winners will be flown to Los Angeles via Philippine Airlines.

Now on its seventh year, the member-guest tournament, which will be held at the Tagaytay Highlands and Midlands golf courses, is set to be Belle Corp.'s grandest golf event of the year with some 500 players competing for the various prizes.

Players who score aces on any of the designated holes can win a Club Car golf cart, a Northwest Airlines World Business-Class ticket to any destination in the United States, or a Rado Sinatra Swiss Watch.

Capping the four-day event is a safari-theme awards' dinner, with fire eaters, drum beaters and percussion ensemble, at the Highlands Multipurpose Hall, at 5:30 p.m., May 6.

Event sponsors include Belle Corp., Toyota Motors Phils., Highlands Prime Inc., SM Prime Inc., Philippine Airlines, Northwest Airlines, Samsung, Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corp., Turf Company, Yamaha Golf Cars, Rado, G2K Corp./WOW Magic Sing, Werdenberg, and IPI, official score tabulator of the Belle Cup Golf Tournament.

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T.G.I.F. Thank Goodness It's Five days.

Now that you have found that home you've always wanted to provide for your family, looking for that bank to help you finance that home seems hard to find. Every bank in the country seems to promise fast processing. But what is the measure of "fast"?

With PSBank, the country's second largest savings bank, the definition of fast processing is a decision on your home loan application in 5 days or less. Yes, you read it right, 5 days or less, guaranteed! That's all the time PSBank needs to process your home loan application from submission of complete documents. Plus, you will receive updates on your home loan application via SMS, another first from PSBank, so you don't have to worry the status of your loan application. This fast service can be enjoyed at all PSBank branches nationwide.

This is not an empty promise. If they do not live up to this, PSBank is giving a 1% reduction on the first year interest rate for all approved home loans.

How does it work? Simple. PSBanks Home Loan Thank Goodness Its Five days (TGIF) challenge is open to all individual clients* nationwide who avail any of the following PSBank Home Loan products: Home Rate Protect, Home Construction Loan and Home Credit Line. Maximum loan value of the home loan application for Home Rate Protect and Home Construction Loan is P10,000,000, while Home Credit Line is P5,000,000. The home loan application must have an approved credit decision. Disapproved home loan applications are automatically disqualified. An approved credit decision is when PSBank approves the client's home loan application at an amount equal to or less than what was applied for.

The client needs to submit a completely filled up home loan application form together with the complete required documents at any PSBank branch from April 24, 2006 to June 30, 2006. The client will then receive a PSBank Home Loan TGIF 5-day Challenge Voucher signifying submission of complete requirements. It will also contain information regarding when the application was submitted, the start and end dates of the challenge. The 5-day challenge will start immediately the next banking day after PSBank accepts the complete requirements.

Clients must have a cell phone number where PSBank can send SMS updates on his home loan application. PSBank will notify the client once a credit decision has been reached on his home loan application via SMS.

The challenge ends when PSBank provides its first credit decision on the client's home loan application. The first credit decision should not be later than 5 banking days after submission of documents. If the first credit decision is an approved decision and took more than 5 banking days after submission of application, the client will get a 1% discount on his first year's home loan interest rate.

This is PSBank's firm commitment in delivering fast service to its clients. Now, getting that home is sooner than you think!

* excludes DOSRI (Directors, Officers, Shareholders and Related Interest), partnerships, corporations and existing clients whose total exposure to the bank will exceed P15Million (including the current home loan application)

ADVT.

T.G.I.F.

Thank Goodness It's Five days.

If you don't get a decision on your home loan application in 5 days or less, we'll give you 1% off on your first year interest rate.

PSBank
PHILIPPINE SAVINGS BANK
A METROBANK SUBSIDIARY

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For more information: Call us: 845-8772 Text us: PSBANK HOME AD <your name> <landline nos.> <email address> then send to 391-772 for Smart or 0917-890-2327 for Globe and other users
Email us: info@psbank.com.ph
Offer runs from April 24, 2006 up to June 30, 2006. See flyers for details.

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